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Ezekiel

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THE CENTURY BIBLE

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

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SYRIA, ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, &c.

The Century Bible

General Editor:
Principal Walter F. Adeney, M.A., D.D.

Ezekiel

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
AND INDEX

BY

W. F. LOFTHOUSE, M.A.

R IN HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, HANDSWORTH COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM; AUTHOR OF 'ETHICS AND ATONEMENT'

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

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HISTORICAL EVENTS CONNECTED WITH EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES.

B. C.	
701.	Deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib.
698.	Manasseh.[1]
641.	Josiah.[1]
c. 630.	Scythian invasion.
627.	Jeremiah begins his work.
621.	Discovery of the Book of the Law.
608.	Josiah slain at Megiddo. Jehoahaz; succeeded by Jehoiakim (Eliakim).
605.	Defeat of Necho at Carchemish.
596.	Surrender of Jehoiachin; First Deportation; Zedekiah.
587.	Siege of Jerusalem commenced (January).
586.	Pharaoh's attempted assistance (April). Fall of Jerusalem (July);[2] Second Deportation. Nebuchadnezzar attacks Tyre.
581.	Third Deportation.
568.	Nebuchadnezzar invades Egypt.
562.	Death of Nebuchadnezzar.
538.	Cyrus takes Babylon.
537.	First Return of Jews under Zerubbabel. Restoration of Altar.
520.	Rebuilding of Temple commenced.
515.	Temple completed.
444.	Ezra reads the Law at Jerusalem.

[1] Marti (*Enc. Bib.*, Art. CHRONOLOGY) prefers the dates 692, 638.

[2] This is the date usually accepted now; in 2 Kings xxv. 2, 8 (=Jer. lii. 5, 12) the city falls in the eleventh year of Zedekiah and the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar (who came to the throne in 604); so Jer. xxxii. 1 identifies the tenth year of Zedekiah with the eighteenth of Nebuchadnezzar. Jer. lii. 29, however, dates the second deportation (and ? the fall of the city) in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year. See also note on i. 2.

TABLE B.

DATES OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES.

Part I. Chapters I–XXIV.

B.C.		
July 592.	i. 2.	The Prophet's Call. First Cycle of Threats.
Aug. 591.	viii. 1.[1]	Jerusalem's Sin. Second Cycle of Threats.
Aug. 590.	xx. 1.	Third Cycle of Threats.
Jan. 587.	xxiv. 1.	The End at Hand!

Part II. Chapters XXV–XLVIII.

Division 1. Chapters XXV–XXXII. The Fall of the Nations.

.....	xxv. 1.	Oracles against Ammon, &c., and Tyre.
Jan. 586.	xxix. 1.	Oracle against Egypt.
Mar. 586.	xxx. 20.	Oracle against Egypt.
May 586.	xxxi. 1.	Oracle against Egypt.

Division 2. Chapters XXXIII–XXXIX. The Purification of Israel.

Jan. 585.	xxxiii. 21.	Individual Responsibility. The Restoration and Final Deliverance.
[Mar. 585.	xxvi. 1.[1]	Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Tyre.
Feb. 584.	xxxii. 1.	Dirge over Egypt.
Feb. 584.	xxxii. 17.[1]	Dirge over Egypt.]

Division 3. Chapters XL–XLVIII. The Ordering of the Nation.

Sept. 572.	xl. 1.[1]	The Temple, the Temple Service, and the Land.
[Mar. 570.	xxix. 17.[1]	Last Prophecy on Tyre.]

Note. In the first half of the book the order of chapters is strictly chronological; in the group of prophecies against the nations the order is broken by chap. xxvi; xxxiii. 21 is naturally placed at the head of the next group. xxix. 17 ff. is inserted immediately after the prophecy which it corrects. The subject headings belong to the sections intervening between the dates actually given.

[1] See note *ad loc.*

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET
EZEKIEL

INTRODUCTION

THE PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL

INTRODUCTION

I. Ezekiel's Work and Character.

The book of Ezekiel is generally considered to be one of the most difficult in the Bible; it is certainly one of the most interesting. At the centre of the development of Israelite history and religion stand the prophets; at the centre of the goodly fellowship of the prophets stands Ezekiel. The religious thought and activity of Israel is full of contrasts; the contrast between prophet and priest, the messages which they brought to the nation and the principles for which they stood; the contrast between their ideals for the nation and for the individual, and the consequent differences in their thoughts of God, the soul, and the world; the contrast between the speaker and the writer, and between the preacher who directs himself to the needs of the present, and the seer who projects his gaze to the day of the final consummation of God's righteousness; the contrast between the philosophic interpretation of national history and the inspired outbursts of religious emotion;—all these contrasts meet in Ezekiel, at once priest and prophet, inspirer of a nation and pastor of individual souls, the preacher to expectant audiences and the writer for future generations. Keenly conscious of the needs of the present, he elaborates a surprisingly detailed plan for an ideal service of God, and at the same time, plunging still deeper into the future, he forms for all future ages their conception of the final judgement. In each case Ezekiel marks the transition from one principle to the other, and in each case the

study of Ezekiel shows that there is no gap in the history in which these contrasts are contained—only an orderly and necessary development. It is not too much to say that Ezekiel holds the Old Testament together, and we shall see reason to believe that he, of all Old Testament writers, binds the old dispensation most closely to the new. 'Ezekiel,' says Professor H. P. Smith, 'is the most influential man that we find in the whole course of Hebrew history'; he emphasizes, while he bridges, the break between the older Israelitism of the past and the Judaism of the future. The conceptions of religion which he predicted for the later generations of his countrymen were actually theirs. All that was noble among the later Jews was the gift of Ezekiel, handed down by him as a legacy from the earlier ages, and transformed by him so as to persist under the changed conditions; and all that was evil in the Pharisaism that rejected Paul's gospel and slew the Lord of Glory rose from a misunderstanding of the truths which it was given to Ezekiel to expound.

More interesting, however, than his writings and his importance for the development of Jewish thought is his own personality. We have the materials for knowing Ezekiel better than any other man in the Old Testament; perhaps, with the single exception of Paul, better than any man in the whole Bible. The great characters of earlier history leave us with the problem of separating what later ages thought about them from what they were themselves; the writers of the prophetic, as of the apostolic age, leave us with equally difficult problems as to the time, order, and occasion of their writings—of our only data, that is to say, for becoming acquainted with the men themselves. But in the case of Ezekiel these problems are hardly suggested. We have a series of writings to which for the most part dates are carefully attached, and which reveal an orderly connexion both with one another and with the course of their author's thought and experiences. In the book of Isaiah—and even in the first thirty-

nine chapters of the book—is included much which modern study has attributed to later times. The writings of Jeremiah have strangely and almost hopelessly lost their chronological sequence. Even the 'minor' prophets reveal themselves as compilations of different times and often of different authors. But the unity and orderliness of Ezekiel's works is striking and practically unquestioned[1]; and the personality which they reveal is not less striking.

At first sight, the impression left by reading Ezekiel is disappointing and even repellent. All that is best in him seems borrowed from Jeremiah; all the rest nothing more than the product of a mind unable to separate the kernel of true religion from the husk of formula and ritual. But closer study reveals the opposite. What seemed mere enthusiasm for ritual now shows itself as a scrupulous and earnest conscientiousness, to which every command of God is important, simply because it is from God; which feels a single infringement of the law to be a breaking of the whole, and which is perfectly familiar with the truth, still only half learnt, that in religion the bodily and the mental, the inner and the outer, must for ever influence and react on one another.

Joined to this scrupulous conscientiousness in Ezekiel, though not always found in connexion with it elsewhere, is a strong and at times overwhelming passionateness of nature. There are no passages more fully charged with emotion in the whole range of literature than are to be found in the Old Testament, unless we except some of the burning words of our Lord; but not even Jeremiah himself, tempestuous as are his outbursts of rage or despair, has surpassed the sustained invective against the sinful and adulterous nation in chapter xvi, or the fierce triumph

[1] Zunz and Volz, who have connected the book with the Persian and the Maccabean periods respectively, have not succeeded in attracting any wide attention. See also note on xxxviii 23.

of the weird description of the underworld in chapter xxxii. With Ezekiel the passion does not always lie on the surface; he checks it, struggles to keep the upper hand, so to speak, proceeds as if he were quite calm; and then he is suddenly mastered by the almost conquered foe and carried away.

The priestly and ritualistic element in his nature, strange to say, only makes this passion the more intense; for in him, as we shall see, sin does not merely rouse a moral indignation, as in Isaiah or Juvenal or Carlyle; it fills him with a sense of almost physical repulsion; with a loathing and horror that control for the time his whole being, and inspire him with a kind of fury towards those who practice or even tolerate it; a fury whose expression sometimes all but oversteps what are to us the limits even of decency, and equalled only by the 'sacred rage' of Dante.

This leads us naturally to another side of Ezekiel's nature, his sensitiveness. Here too we find the same only half successful attempt at self-repression. Like Jeremiah, he must contemplate and foretell the ruin of all he loves best on earth; like Jeremiah, he must steel himself against the frowns and angry remonstrances of his hearers; unlike Jeremiah, he feels himself forbidden to express his grief. To regret the fate of such sinners as the idolatrous remnant in Jerusalem would seem treason to Yahweh; yet he cannot altogether restrain his sorrow[1]; to his keen Israelite patriotism the fall of Jerusalem is as the death of his own wife; yet when his wife dies, he must sit paralysed and silent[2]. Like the other prophets he knows that his message will constantly be rejected; more than that, his prophecies do not always come literally true. He has to address audiences who gather before him simply for the aesthetic pleasure of listening to his rhapsodies[3]; and there can be few things more pathetic than his references to the opening of his mouth, when, after months and years of

[1] ix. 8. [2] xxiv. 17. [3] xxxiii. 32.

misunderstanding and contempt, his words are at last treated with respect[1].

Ezekiel was a Puritan; yet, like Milton, he has all a poet's sense of things; he loves a picturesque and effective catalogue as much as Milton or Homer. The descriptions of the shameless careers of Israel and Judah as loose and profligate women are not more remarkable for their vigour and passion than for their freshness and incisiveness of detail. The roll-call of the allies of Tyre, and the parade of the armies of the dead in the underworld, show precisely the same sense of the individual in subordination to the whole; the scenes of idolatrous worship in the temple, as Ezekiel describes them, possess a vividness which only a master of expression would have flung into so few words; the details of the theophany at the beginning of the book, as contrasted with the vagueness in the corresponding passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah, are certainly very much more than otiose elaboration; and the last nine chapters, with their persistent emphasis on small and accurate measurements, are felt after a time to be the carefully chosen means for producing a total impression of clearness and artistic insight, perhaps otherwise unattainable.

To this must be added an almost more fascinating element in the problem of Ezekiel's character. It would appear that there runs through all the prophet's activities, at least in the earlier period, a strain of mental abnormality—perhaps of actual malady. By some writers, notably by Klostermann, this has been supposed to be a form of catalepsy. The various arguments in support of this view will be discussed in the notes. Probably Ezekiel was no more a cataleptic than Paul; with equal probability he was what would now be called a 'psychical' subject—and, as such, liable to trances—and perhaps a clairvoyant. In any case, he would appear to be gifted with those powers of passing 'over the threshold' which a great

[1] xxiv. 27, xxxiii. 22.

many of us possess to some slight degree, perhaps without discovering it, and which he himself, living before the days of strict medical investigation or nomenclature, could only describe by the categories at his command [1].

Ezekiel may be said to have given us the only 'work of art' in the Old Testament. As Smend says, the whole book is the 'logical development of a series of thoughts on a carefully elaborated and schematic plan; nothing can be removed without disarranging the whole.' The Hebrew genius, great and remarkable as it is, can hardly be called artistic, from the point of view of symmetry. It is greatest in expressing the passionate feelings of the moment; we see it at its best and most characteristic in some of the Psalms, or in the lyrical outbursts in Job or in the Prophets; sustained feeling is seldom met with. There are indeed long passages of fine rhetoric or narrative to be found in Deuteronomy or in Kings; but the passages are for the most part complete in themselves; the inspiration pulses for a time, and then appears to cease. Ezekiel is free from this intermittentness. It is true that he occasionally rises to great heights, and then falls again; but on closer inspection there is always reason, both for the rise and for the fall; each has a special fitness in relation to its context. More than any other Hebrew writer, Ezekiel is the architect of his composition.

Again, all Hebrew literature evidences a distinct fondness for compilation and a reverence for what is written. That the historical books are compilations is well known; and it is probable that the same tendency has had very much to do with the present form of most parts of the Old Testament. Ezekiel is in this respect completely different, alike from the Prophets and the Law. Hence the almost entire absence of critical questions in connexion with his

[1] See iii. 12, 22, &c., and cp. Virgil, *Aeneid* vi. 79 'tanto magis ille fatigat Os rabidum,' &c. Independently of the visions in i–iii and xl five ecstasies are mentioned, viii. 1–16, xi. 1–13, xxiv. 1, xxxiii. 22, xxxvii. 1.

work. Indeed, an analysis of the structure of the book shows compilation to be out of the question. Not only is the style unmistakable; the book as a whole falls into two equal parts, each of which is divided and subdivided, every part preparing for what immediately follows, and reminding us of the ordered symmetry of a cathedral. Cornill and others have rightly laid stress on the symmetry of the whole book, as striking as that of the ideal temple with whose description the book closes; a description which Cornill has suggestively called the spire by which the whole cathedral is crowned.[1]

It is now necessary to say comparatively little about Ezekiel's style. This is just what we should expect from what has been already observed. 'Le style, c'est de l'homme même.' This is pre-eminently true of Ezekiel. Few epithets have been thought too severe for it;—formal and even formulistic, turgid and overloaded, lacking the fire of Isaiah, the stern brevity of Amos, the pathos of Hosea or Jeremiah, the grandeur of the second Isaiah; has he, some have even asked, any poetic power at all? Smend, who finds him at times an 'infelicitous imitator of older prophets,' sees but little inspiration even in Ezekiel's characteristic dirge-songs. But there can be no doubt that his literary powers are very marked. The style is imaginative in the highest degree. Doubtless an English reader may find some difficulty in fully realizing this; yet the finest imagery in the Revelation is borrowed from Ezekiel. The vision of Yahweh's chariot growing in clearness and complexity out of the storm cloud in the north, the picture of Nebuchadnezzar at the

[1] R. G. Moulton finds in the Old Testament a literary characteristic, whereby the most important part of a section is placed in the precise centre, like the keystone of an arch. This may certainly be observed in Ezekiel. Moulton finds the same principle also in Shakespeare's plays, where the turning-point invariably occurs in the middle scene of the middle act: see his *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, p. 186.

cross-roads debating whether to attack Judah or Ammon, the lament of the nations over Tyre, the description of the dried-up bones of the slaughtered army, are only examples of a style which unites terseness and fullness with remarkable skill. True, he has a peculiar manner of saying the same thing twice over, directly, and in a figure[1]; and there are many passages in which we find a quite needless redundancy of expression; this, however, may be owing to the faulty state of a text acknowledged to be in places exceedingly corrupt[2]. In any case, in point of style, as in so much else, Ezekiel stands midway in the development of the thought and activity of his people. He must be read in bulk; but when this justice is done him, he will be found to stretch out one hand to the melodious snatches and emotional outbursts of the earlier literature, and with the other to touch the reflective and leisurely compositions of later Judaism; and for his own part he exhibits a special mastery over the lament or dirge[3], a species of writing wherein his passion and his tenderness, his wide vocabulary and his keen sense of proportion find their fittest vehicle.

We should be unjust to Ezekiel if we did not mention at this point another characteristic; his surprisingly varied use of simile and allegory, parable and symbol. Figurative expressions and passages, more or less elaborate, abound in the Bible, as in all oriental literature[4]; they are especially common in prophecy, where again and again an emblem, a symbolic action, a parable, or a vision, is made as it were the text of a prophetic discourse. But Ezekiel's use of the emblem is far more elaborate than that of his predecessors. Now he carries out some lengthy symbolical action—so lengthy that we wonder if

[1] Cf. xxviii. 1–10, 11–19, xxx. 20–26, xxxi. 1–14; xxxvii. 1–14 is an elaboration of xxxvi. 26, 27.

[2] See pp. 43–7. [3] See p. 161.

[4] How much, for example, is figurative, and how much literal, in Omar Khayyám?

it was ever really 'acted' at all; now he takes a popular proverb and gives a dramatic turn to its interpretation; now he snatches a sword and makes it almost tell his tale for him; now he gives us a long and picturesque narrative, only allowing his hearers, as did the Prophet of Nazareth, to gather the moral from the general tenor of the story and a few pregnant words of application flung into its centre; and when, at the end of the book, he describes his final vision of the new temple and city, he leaves us in doubt—such a doubt as he loved to rouse—whether, in his own mind, what he describes is to be literally fulfilled, or is only a shadow of what is really indescribable.

What is really indescribable;—this is the burden of the whole prophecy. For Ezekiel lives in a world of thoughts that 'break through language and escape.' The precise and scrupulous priest, who will not have his altar base an inch either more or less than a perfect square, sees his country as the centre and subject of a drama of punishment, recovery, and repentance, before whose awful and divine glory the mind reels in dismay. 'He loved the symbol, not for itself alone, but for the majesty which it contained, the hidden light which it guarded. It is in this region alone that he seems to wear an absorbed and pontifical air, not with the false sacerdotal desire to enhance personal impressiveness and private dignity, through the ministry of divine powers and holy secrets, but with the unconscious emotion of one whose eyes behold great wonders enacting themselves upon the bodiless air, which the dull and contemptuous may not discern.'[1]

[1] A. C. Benson, on Walter Pater. Schiller wished to learn Hebrew that he might read Ezekiel in the original; Victor Hugo places Ezekiel, with Homer, Aeschylus, Juvenal, and others, in 'the avenue of the immovable giants of the human mind.'

II. In Exile.

Ezekiel's central position is equally noteworthy when we turn to the historical conditions of his life. The exile was the period in which the Jewish nation seemed to stand between two worlds, 'one dead, one powerless to be born.' That what was best in the old revived, and that the new really did come to the birth, was the result of Ezekiel's activity. Even the other great prophet of the exile, vastly more familiar as he is to most people to-day, had far less influence, as far as we can see, either on the Jews of the exile, or on their successors who returned to Palestine, than the exiled priest who lived among them by the river Chebar.

Rightly to appreciate the significance of Ezekiel's work, it must be remembered that the exile was the centre and not the end of the history of Israel. There has never been a more crowded and catastrophic period in the history of the world than the two centuries which begin with the seige of Samaria and end with the first return of the Jews from Babylon[1]. In those two centuries the positions of all the great powers of the ancient world were fundamentally changed, and Israel and Judah were of course unable to escape the general disasters.

The northern kingdom fell at the very beginning of the period. When Samaria was captured in 722, Judah was already a vassal state of Assyria. Her bold stroke for liberty under Hezekiah left her safe, but terribly impoverished[2]. Before the long reign of his successor had ended, the days of Assyria were numbered. Perhaps under Isaiah's influence, Hezekiah had carried through some measures of religious reform; during Manasseh's reign these were swept away before a flood-tide of idolatry and foreign worship; and the few faithful souls who remained

[1] From 725 to 537 B. C.

[2] See Whitehouse, Century Bible, *Commentary on Isaiah*, pp. 25, 26 (footnote).

became convinced that a far more drastic reformation was needed, in order to make such horrors impossible. Early in the reign of Josiah (621) a scheme or law [1] embodying their ideas was brought to light and at once accepted as authoritative or Mosaic; the local sanctuaries ceased to exist, and their officiating priests were brought to serve in subordinate capacities in Jerusalem [2].

The hopes founded on these measures were soon disappointed. In a vain attempt to preserve the newly purified land from the Egyptian foreigner, Josiah perished at Megiddo in 608; and there now began in Jerusalem a period of religious fanaticism and fierce longing for political independence. After the three months' reign of Jehoahaz, Necho placed his elder brother, Eliakim or Jehoiakim, on the throne. For eleven years, in spite of the stern warnings of Jeremiah, he played off Egypt against Babylon; then, after a sharp resistance, the city fell, three months after Jehoiakim's death, and with his son, Jehoiachin, the flower of the nation was carried away into Babylon [3]. Among the captives went Ezekiel, a young priest, as it would seem, thirty or forty years old.

The city with the remaining population was spared, and Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, was placed on the throne. But the men who surrounded the new king had learnt nothing. In vain Jeremiah reminded them that the glory of Yahweh was quite independent of the fate of Jerusalem. With a bravery as surprising as it was mistaken they carried on the old policy for another ten years; and then the crash came. Egypt once more proved herself a broken reed; the city, after being invested for a year and a half, was stormed; Zedekiah, after a vain attempt at flight, taken prisoner and blinded, and the whole territory practically stripped of its inhabitants.

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[1] This law forms the kernel of our book of Deuteronomy.
[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 9: see also note on xliv. 10.
[3] See 2 Kings xxiv. 14, 16; contrast Jer. lii. 28–30.

The doom of Judah was now complete. And it was more severe than the word Exile might suggest to us. For exile meant separation not only from the land, but from the god of the land. The average Hebrew, it would appear, never thought of Yahweh as being actually confined to Palestine; he came to the help of his people from Sinai or from Paran; he could show his power over the nations of the earth; but his worship was confined to Palestine. There were his altars and high places; all other lands were polluted, unclean. For those who had accepted the centralization of worship at Jerusalem (that is, for all the best spirits in the nation) the logical impossibility of drawing near to Yahweh in a foreign land was even clearer. Worse than this, the whole world had now seen that Yahweh was as unable to protect his own land and people as were the other gods. 'Has our faith,' the Hebrews would ask themselves, 'been after all a mistake? Were all the promises given to our fathers mere delusions? Was it for nothing that Josiah turned to seek Yahweh's face? Surely we are not so much worse than the men of earlier times; it is for their sins that we are being punished. Is not Yahweh as unjust as he is weak?' Doubtless such questions as these were asked by the first band of exiles. But while Jerusalem was still standing an answer was readily suggested; Yahweh would still be worshipped by some of the people at least, and sooner or later the clouds would be dispersed and the exiles would return. Jeremiah wrote to them from Jerusalem that it would be two generations at least before they would return[1]; Ezekiel told them that instead of the clouds dispersing the storm would break; but they could not grasp the new idea that locality could make no difference to the power and presence of Yahweh. Their very trust in Yahweh made them turn a deaf ear to Ezekiel and Jeremiah alike.

[1] Jer. xxix. 10.

Naturally, when the storm did break, their faith was shaken. What was left for them? Sharing the downfall of their neighbours, with all patriotic pride in the glories of the house of David destroyed, robbed of the practice and the consolations of religion itself, would the remnant of Judah become merged in the surrounding heathenism, as the remnant of the northern kingdom had been a century before? This danger was all the more pressing for another reason. The conditions of the life in Babylon were by no means hard. The exile was not a captivity; it meant rather the single restriction that the Jews could not go back to Palestine. They were allowed to form communities of their own, and enjoyed a considerable degree of social freedom.

Of late years discoveries in Mesopotamia have thrown a flood of light on Babylonian society and commerce [1]. Whether we form our opinions from the code of Hammurabi, drawn up nearly seventeen centuries before Ezekiel's time, or from the business documents and letters of Nebuchadnezzar's empire, we find a civilization highly organized and strikingly modern. The government of the country was similar to that of France towards the end of the *ancien régime*; the high temple officials divided the financial activities of the country with the large banking houses; noble ladies gave themselves up to the service of religion, like the high-born abbesses and prioresses of the middle ages, and apparently with no more suggestion of immorality than they. Class distinctions were carefully preserved, though the middle classes were constantly claiming the titles and privileges of gentility; legal settlements and contracts were almost as cumbrous as they are to-day; resident aliens easily became citizens and rested under no disabilities. True, slavery was a universal institution, and a certain barbarity and contempt for human life ran

[1] See especially Johns, *Babylonian Laws, Contracts, and Letters.*

through the laws; yet punishments were not more cruel than they were in Europe 200 years ago, and a modern Englishman—were the difficulty of language surmounted—would probably find himself at least as much at home in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon as in the England of Henry VIII[1].

Into all this 'modern' life the Jews seem to have entered readily. In a few years, Jehoiachin was brought back to court under Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach[2]; and life was certainly much easier for the Jews under Nebuchadrezzar than for the northern exiles under Sargon. Moreover, some of the exiles tried to keep up the cultus of Yahweh by practices which true religion could not but abhor[3]. Israel had assimilated herself with fatal ease to the civilization of Canaan in the old days; what was there to prevent a corresponding, but far more disastrous, assimilation now[4]? Only one thing: the presence of Ezekiel. Jeremiah had been left in Palestine, and then dragged away into Egypt; nor did he ever exert a wide influence among the exiles or in Jerusalem. At first sight Ezekiel would seem to have been even less fitted to be the

[1] It is noteworthy that Ezekiel, unlike his predecessors (cf. Jer. l, li), has not a word to say against Babylon. This may be partly due to considerations of prudence; but partly, no doubt, to a recognition of Nebuchadnezzar's high character and firm rule. The pretence of the lament over Babylon in Rev. xviii is borrowed from Ezekiel's funeral ode over Tyre. There is no direct mention of Babylon in Isa. xl–lxvi.

[2] 2 Kings xxv. 27. [3] xx. 31, 33.

[4] Further light is thrown on the condition of the Jews in Babylonia by a remarkable discovery of Aramaic business documents at Assouan (see note on xxix. 10) in 1904, dating from 471–411 B. C. and referring to members of a Jewish community living there and in Elephantine, who would seem to be the descendants of the Jewish refugees in Egypt mentioned in Jer. xli. 17–18, xlii–xliv. These Jews have their own 'chapel' or, as Schürer strongly prefers, 'altar'; they intermarry with Egyptians, and they swear not only by Yahweh but by Egyptian gods as well. That they were commercially and socially prosperous and enjoyed religious toleration is clear.

saviour of society and the sponsor of a new order of things. Did he not share the views of the people on sacrifice and ritual? Did he not also believe in the holiness of Palestine and the impossibility of worship on any other soil? Did not he lack that quick sympathy and altogether human love for his country which beat so strongly in the heart of Jeremiah? Was not the statesman and the patriot in him lost in the ecclesiastic? Did not his mental malady unfit him for the task of founding the new dispensation in the affections of his people?

All this might appear from the first reading of his book. But his apparent limitations were his real strength. So long as Jerusalem was still standing, he was opposed, as Jeremiah was opposed in Jerusalem; he felt himself oppressed and confined; no one would believe him; he was 'dumb.' When its fall became a certainty to his neighbours, we notice at once a sense of relief; the 'dumbness' was removed. And now, unlike Jeremiah, he could show that he felt the people's problems in the people's way. The soil of Palestine was holy; but they had polluted it, and it could only be hallowed by the uprooting of the old national life. Sacrifices were necessary: but the exile was the indispensable preparation for the institution of sacrifices which could never be prostituted to false gods. The temple was indeed the centre of the national life; but the old temple had been misused till it was worse than one of the high places; its fall prepared the way for the true temple in which Yahweh could dwell undisturbed.

Further, the heathen had indeed exulted over what they imagined was Yahweh's defeat; but this would simply show them the restoration of a repentant and purified Israel, and reveal Yahweh's real character and grandeur[1]. All that had happened or would happen was simply 'in maiorem gloriam Dei.' Once Jerusalem had fallen, all

[1] Cf. the constantly recurring formula, 'They shall know that I am Yahweh.'

this became plain. For Ezekiel, and for all true Jewish piety, the fundamental truth was not the union between Yahweh and his people, but the majesty of Yahweh himself. The fall of Jerusalem placed this majesty in its true light. If it existed at all, it existed not for one nation or land, but for all nations, and for the whole earth. This having been shown, it only remained for his enemies (who had really been working Yahweh's will) to be removed, the programme to be carried out, and the ideal to be attained.

III. Prophet and Priest.

What is Ezekiel's place in the history of Hebrew prophecy? The approaching ruin of Judah forced both Jeremiah and Ezekiel to face two problems, both of which Jeremiah dismissed somewhat rapidly, while Ezekiel had to meet their full force. The first was this; if Israel is destroyed root and branch, what then is to become of Yahweh? To the thought of the time, a people was as necessary to its god as the god to his people. If Yahweh were supreme, as the prophets had claimed, and as Judah believed, surely he would not share in the common disgrace of the gods of the heathen. The answer which both Jeremiah and Ezekiel gave was that the real Israel would not perish. Yahweh would pour out his spirit, and would give a new covenant to his people, a covenant which would be unlike the old one in that it would not be broken. This conception Ezekiel elaborates in numerous passages which all point to the magnificent prophecy of chapter xxxvii. That the nation will permanently remain in exile is unthinkable. Yahweh has brought them thus low in order to show his power to vindicate his own law in the eyes of the world, 'that they may know that I am Yahweh'; but he will destroy the hostile nations, and then bring back his chosen people—albeit a diminished remnant—to their own land; he will thus prove before

the world his power to save them. But this mercy of his toward them will no longer fill them with the false confidence which puffed up the men who were left in Jerusalem after the first deportation. They must learn that their restoration is not in the least due to themselves or to any special favour which Yahweh has for them; the one effect of his goodness on them will be to fill them with a deep loathing for their former sins. The goodness of God will lead them to repentance [1]. Thus Yahweh's power even over the hearts of his people will be manifested; and if this should seem impossible in the case of exiles, who, as they felt, were no more than the dried-up skeletons of a slain host, the word of prophecy could call Yahweh's own breath of life into the bones, and with the nation thus risen from the dead, the new covenant would be completed.

After these three vindications, only one more is needful or possible. The surrounding foes of Israel will have already recognized in their own calamities the majesty of Yahweh; now the whole earth must see it. Accordingly the mysterious nations of the far north are summoned to sweep over the lands till Israel is reached; there, on the mountains of Israel, they fall, by an extermination as complete as befell the Midianites before Gideon, as secret as that which overthrew the host of Sennacherib; and for months Israel will be engaged in burying the slain. Thus Yahweh will be acknowledged as supreme by the whole earth, and the sons of Israel will at last be able to worship aright, none daring to make them afraid.

How far is Ezekiel here making an advance on his predecessors? That they were thorough and complete monotheists cannot for a moment be denied; they knew no gods beside Yahweh; but what was in them an instinct, a conviction to be overheard rather than heard explicitly, Ezekiel develops into a reasoned doctrine [2]. For the

[1] Rom. ii. 4.
[2] Cf. Isa. ii. 2–4; Mic. iv. 1–3 (contrast verse 5).

vindication of Yahweh's honour, as is natural, he displays a special zeal. His teaching, not only of the universal power of Yahweh, but of its future universal recognition, is his own. It must be noted, however, that he leaves room for further progress ; he has not made the discovery that revolutionized the life of Saul of Tarsus. The Gentiles are to recognize Yahweh ; but that they can serve him, or be accepted by him, Ezekiel never suspects, nor does he provide for such a consummation ; the law is for Israel, and Israel alone.

The second problem was this : 'Are we so much worse than previous generations? Surely we are being punished for their sins ; the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Jeremiah contents himself with saying[1] that if this has been so in the past, it will not be so in the future. Ezekiel goes further into the matter, and so has gained the title of the father of individualism. His treatment of the subject is highly important[2], and here too he stands midway between earlier and later points of view. His silence is as instructive as his teaching. Unlike Jeremiah, he repudiates altogether the idea that one man can be punished for another ; it is the soul which sins that shall die. Yahweh is not baulked in his desire to punish the guilty, and so compelled to execute a clumsy vengeance on the innocent. All souls belong to him ; the most scrupulous goodness in the father cannot protect a wicked son ; nor can a previous life of goodness atone for evil, nor a previous life of evil prevent the reward of subsequent turning to Yahweh.

This is stated by Ezekiel in terms of almost mathematical precision ; yet we shall notice that throughout his writings he by no means shakes himself free from the older and national as opposed to the newer and individual point of view. Like his predecessors, he regards Israel as

[1] xxxi. 30.
[2] See pp. 154, 155.

a single moral personality to be either rewarded or punished. The individuals whom he sees practising their idolatrous abominations are typical of the whole nation; it is a nation which he indicts in the terrible sixth and twenty-third chapters; and it is a restored nation, though freed from many of its national duties and responsibilities, for which he legislates in the last nine chapters of the book. We do no dishonour to the prophets when we say that they constantly failed to draw out the consequences of the principles they announced. Ezekiel went further than his predecessors; he saw what was involved in the justice of Yahweh, which would punish no one who had not deserved to be punished. Yet at the very moment when he went beyond his predecessors he returned to their side, and left the full working out of his own principle for the future.

Like all the prophets, Ezekiel turns his attention to foreign nations. In a series of nine chapters, in the centre of his book, he predicts the fall of seven of the most powerful of them [1]. This raises another of the many problems which the study of Ezekiel suggests. In what sense can Ezekiel be said to foretell the future? These nine chapters are full of predictions,—far more so than any that precede. Were the predictions fulfilled? The answer is that they were fulfilled only in the most general and vague sense. To announce that the neighbouring tribes would fall as Judah was falling needed little political penetration and no supernatural illumination; nor does Ezekiel in dealing with their fate give any details by which some special source of knowledge could have been proved. When we turn to the two great powers of Egypt and Tyre, to which he devotes some of his finest and most impressive writing, his predictions, if they have been verified at all, have not been verified in his sense. For Egypt he prophesied complete destruction.

[1] Babylon is omitted from the list: see note on p. 16.

Pharaoh was to go down with all his multitude into the underworld. As a matter of fact, Egypt rather remarkably escaped the destruction with which Babylon seemed again and again to threaten her, and indeed preserved some sort of national existence into Roman times. In the case of Tyre, Ezekiel lived long enough to see that the fate with which he had threatened her was not to be accomplished; she resisted the siege of Nebuchadnezzar much as 250 years later she resisted Alexander of Macedon. As it appears in the latest of his prophecies [1], Ezekiel frankly confesses his mistake [2].

Later on, as we have said, Ezekiel foretells a great irruption from the north. In its general features, his description reminds us of the Scythian invasion of c. 630. It never took place, and the literal fulfilment of the last act of the drama of this irruption, as foretold by Ezekiel, would of course be impossible [3]. But surely, it will be urged, Ezekiel foretold the restoration of the Jews, and it took place. This is true; that exile from the promised land could be perpetual none of the prophets could for a moment imagine; but just as little did the restoration take place as Ezekiel or his fellow prophets expected. Jeremiah says very little about the return that is at all definite; he predicts that its duration will last, in round numbers, seventy years; as a matter of fact, only fifty-three years elapsed between the fall of Jerusalem and the first return. Ezekiel foretells a return of prosperity which certainly was not realized, and a spiritual change of which even Ezra and Nehemiah saw very little sign; while his belief that the two kingdoms would once more be definitely united in one nation was as little fulfilled as were the roseate visions of the second Isaiah. Those who actually did return could

[1] xxix. 17 ff.

[2] As we now know (see p. 16, note) Jeremiah's prophecy of the destruction of the Jewish colony in Upper Egypt (xliv. 12 ff.) was not fulfilled.

[3] xxxvii, xxxviii.

only continue to reverence the prophecies as inspired, by throwing their fulfilment further and further into the future, that is, by treating prophecy more and more as apocalypse.

The truth is that the distinction so familiar to us between actual fulfilment of prophecy and the reverse had little place in the mind of the prophets. Certain great principles they knew as well as we do, perhaps better; certain deep convictions about Yahweh's justice and vengeance and loving kindness they proclaimed with increasing devotion; the applications of those convictions and principles they had to express in the language which was at their own command and intelligible to their hearers. That prophecies were fulfilled Ezekiel had no doubt, and the second Isaiah appealed to their fulfilment as a recognized fact. The announcement of the vanity of patriotic hopes in the stability of Judah, or the downfall of a mighty empire like Assyria or Babylon, could not fail to impress those who saw such announcements to be correct; but to read off the pages of history beforehand, in order to gain credence or attention, was no more the aim of the prophets than it was of him in whom all prophecy was fulfilled[1].

Is the same account, then, to be given of the predictions, if such they be, in the last nine chapters? This leads us directly to the question, What is Ezekiel's place in the history of the Hebrew priesthood? These chapters will only be intelligible if we start upon their consideration from the conception of holiness. The root idea of the holiness is still very difficult to determine. 'The holy,' says Wellhausen, 'is the prohibited.' S. Reinach expresses that which is holy—'taboo' or 'sacer' —as that which is 'fortement marqué'; that which is strongly marked comes to be carefully marked off. A. B. Davidson says that among the Semites the word 'holy,' originally used in a physical sense (though this is not

[1] Compare Matt. xxiv; Luke xxi.

found in the Bible), properly expresses the general nature of deity. Into the archaeological question we need not at present enter[1]; but the word, as we find it in Ezekiel, denotes a contagious quality in Yahweh and in certain persons and articles brought into close contact with Yahweh. This quality, which may exist in greater or less degree, dependent on greater or less nearness to Yahweh, must be carefully guarded by those in whom it resides. It is dangerous to lose; dangerous also to acquire; for those persons and things which possess it are surrounded by certain ceremonial restrictions, the violation of which means pollution; and pollution or profanation must always rouse Yahweh's wrath.

Stated thus, the principle of holiness seems pagan rather than in any true sense religious; and indeed the study of the Biblical conception of holiness constantly reminds us of primitive beliefs and practices, which point forward, so to speak, to the ritual of Israel; but nothing can be found which is connected with the higher side of Israelite religion and is at the same time divorced from morality. To the Hebrew, the three ideas of holiness, purity, and cleanness are as closely connected as they could be to us. Cleanliness is not next to godliness; it is godliness. What rouses Yahweh's wrath is any kind of filth, physical or moral. The difference between a literal and a metaphorical interpretation of the garment 'unspotted by the world' was not yet realized. Literal and metaphorical contamination were equally to be condemned, because each resulted from a self-willed refusal of what Yahweh demands. The ritual acts of the priest at the shrine, in the eyes of the antiquarian, may be simply what have come down to him from his forerunners; to him, they were what his god long ago had commanded. The really noteworthy thing about the priestly law in Israel is that what Yahweh is felt to have commanded justifies itself more and more to the

[1] See notes on xliv. 15-27.

moral sense. Even prohibitions that seem merely capricious or accidental are found to be protections against contamination from those heathen practices where physical and moral uncleanness went hand in hand.

To Ezekiel the prophetic view that the history of the past had been one long moral disobedience was joined to the priests' view that it had been one great ritual mistake. Holy things and places had been put to the wrong uses; there had been a terrible confusion of the sacred and the profane, until at last Yahweh was forced out of his own temple; and his presence had been replaced by that of corpses interred there, of uncircumcised temple servants, and of unholy and monstrous superstitious rites. Sacrifices offered by impure hands could avail nothing. Hence the imperative need of new legislation. The temple must be preserved from all impurity; the degrees of holiness must be preserved; the sacrifices must be defined and fenced round so that they may become effective for real atonement; and the priests must keep themselves pure for their high office. When the temple is thus made the centre of the nation's holiness the whole nation will be grouped, so to speak, around it; there must be as little inter-tribal rivalry as there will be monarchical oppression; each tribe, like the priests, the inhabitants of the holy city, and the prince, will have its own estates to cultivate, and there will be nothing to disturb Yahweh's gracious presence in the midst of his people.

Rightly understood, this scheme of worship does not really separate the worshipper from his god. True, all save the priests must remain in the outer courts of the new temple; and all save the priests must simply look on while the sacrifices are being offered. Others cannot even, it would seem, lay their hands on the victim at the moment it is to be slain. But they know that Yahweh is always ready to be approached; the very name of their city is 'Yahweh is there'; and though the priests alone must perform the sacrifice in the temple, the priests can

in no way step in between Yahweh and the spiritual life of his people. Ezekiel is no sacerdotalist in our modern sense; he knows nothing of confession to a priest, of absolution pronounced from priestly lips, of penances fixed by some priestly casuist, or of any grace of ordination communicated by persons standing in some carefully guarded episcopal succession. Instead of this, he points rather to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christianity itself knows and relies upon a mediator. For us, too, it is needful that one should go within the veil as our forerunner; but our mediator is raised above us infinitely higher than the sons of Zadok were raised above the rest of the chosen people. What had yet to be revealed to Ezekiel was that through such a mediator every privilege capable of being given to any one might be given to all. No longer has the mediator access for us; we have our access through him. Yet no promise could be more majestic or more tender than that for which the Christian seer borrows the very words of Ezekiel: 'God himself shall be with them; and they shall be his people, and he shall be their God.'

Such, then, is the 'prophecy' of the last nine chapters. It is not only a prophecy; it is an ideal. It is not only an ideal; it is a promise. As such, it still awaits complete fulfilment; but 'God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame'; and it is no wonder if, as the sun arises, we forget the light which heralded its approach.

IV. Ezekiel's Utopia.

The preceding section led us to a consideration of Ezekiel's sketch of the future constitution of the Jewish church in his last nine chapters; this subject now demands a further study. These chapters are unique in the Old Testament as being, at least in appearance, a detailed prophecy of the future; they are also unique as containing

a definite and organic body of law. Although so much of the Pentateuch is occupied with the law, yet the law, as we have it, is in a somewhat confused condition, and writings of very different dates are placed in juxtaposition. Even the Decalogue in the forms in which it appears in Exodus and in Deuteronomy, is probably not in its original state [1]. In the book of Exodus it is immediately followed by what is now generally known as the Book of the Covenant [2], a collection of provisions which are distinctly more primitive than any other parts of the law as found in the Pentateuch, and are certainly intended for an early and pastoral or semi-pastoral state of society. Here nothing is said about the illegality of sacrifice and worship save at one central shrine; the cases of crime and fraud which are mentioned are just those which would occur among tribes little removed from the life of the more civilized Bedouin of to-day; the duties enforced are mainly those of elementary morality and humanity, and the law of priests, sacrifices, and feasts is dismissed almost summarily.

When we turn to the book of Deuteronomy, we find it to be a mixture of law, history, and exhortation. The hortatory sections of the book contain some of the finest rhetoric in the Old Testament; the legal sections are obviously later than the Book of the Covenant. Not only is the centralization of worship insisted on in terms which would condemn Samuel, David, and Jehoshaphat alike, but the monarchy is referred to in terms which almost certainly refer to the actual conduct of Solomon and his successors. The points of civil law, though still simple, show a distinct advance on the Book of the Covenant; and the duties of the priesthood are treated with quite a new detail, as foreign to the earlier document as it is to the earlier history of Israel.

The rest of the law exhibits quite different features.

[1] See the discussion in Harper's *Amos and Hosea*, pp. lviii ff.
[2] Exod. xxi. 1–xxiii. 19.

It is scattered up and down the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, with very little perceptible arrangement, but with a very distinct system and even vocabulary of its own. If these laws are all taken from their surroundings and arranged according to their subject-matter, it will be found that the state of things which they contemplate is further removed from Deuteronomy than is Deuteronomy from the Book of the Covenant. We shall find ourselves in possession of a code of which the central idea is a nation organized for worship, under the guidance of a priestly class subdivided into high-priest, priests, and Levites. The institution of a central shrine is never commanded; it is uniformly taken for granted. Not a word is said to imply the existence of a monarchy or of those simple conditions which prevailed before the time of Saul; the necessities of civil government are hardly thought of, and the elaborateness of the feasts with their accompanying sacrifices, now wholly distinct from the popular festivals with which they were identified in the first code, imply that people as well as priests were content to regard the due celebration of ritual as their first business. We even find that ancient history has been rewritten in accord with the religious views of this body of law. It is difficult to imagine when this code could have been obeyed, except after the return from Babylon, or when it could have been composed, except during and after the exile.

But now comes the crucial question, What is the relation of Ezekiel's code to all this? He too has his laws of priests, of sacrifices, and of festivals; to which sections of the Pentateuch do they correspond? Another question should be asked first, Why did he need to draw up any code at all? Why could he not be content with what existed already? If the whole of the Pentateuchal law be regarded as having existed from the time of Moses, this question becomes peculiarly difficult. But if this were the case, the existence of three such different bodies

of law would be an equal difficulty. Here, as so often in Old Testament problems, the key is really furnished by Ezekiel.

A very brief inspection is sufficient to show that Ezekiel's code, however it was intended, lies between Deuteronomy and the developed Levitical legislation which is now generally known as the Priests' code; it could not have been written without the first; it could not have been written had the second been known to the author. The detailed grounds for this statement will be given in the notes to the chapters in question, but the most important of them may be mentioned here.

1. Deuteronomy recognizes no distinction between priests and Levites, but only between the country priests from the 'high places' and the priests of the temple in Jerusalem. The Priests' code sharply distinguishes the functions of priests and Levites. Ezekiel keeps the Deuteronomic distinction between country and city priests, but uses the country priests, who no longer have any other work to do, to replace the uncircumcised aliens who have hitherto ministered in the temple. He further confines the priestly office to the family of Zadok; this restriction is not insisted on in the Priests' code, which regards all the family of Aaron as being of priestly descent.

2. Deuteronomy contemplates monarchical rule and foreign wars. The Priests' code never alludes to one or the other; but regards the high-priest as the supreme head of the community. Ezekiel knows nothing of a high-priest; on the other hand, he replaces the king of the older régime by a 'prince,' who is apparently responsible for the maintenance of the established order of things, but seems to have even less opportunity of initiative than the popes of the middle ages, in the moment of their highest hopes, wished to allow to the 'secular arm.'

3. Deuteronomy, like the older code, is silent as to any Day of Atonement. The impressive ritual of the

annual Day of Atonement in the Priests' code[1] is well known. Ezekiel prescribes two Days of Atonement, one at the beginning of each half-year; but the ceremonial is simple; it resembles that of the Priests' code only in the central idea, viz. that unintentional acts may have violated the holiness which ought to be preserved unspotted in all that pertains to the worship of Yahweh, and thus have rendered necessary a cleansing by the ceremonial shedding of 'atoning' blood.

4. More or less precise details are given in all these codes with reference to the sacrifices to be offered on particular occasions. Not only do these differ, but it will be found in each case that Ezekiel demands rather more than Deuteronomy, and the Priests' code rather more than Ezekiel.

At this point a fresh fact claims notice. As has often been pointed out, the last half of the book of Leviticus[2] has a distinct unity of its own. Klostermann first emphasized this fact, and gave to the ten chapters the name of the Law of Holiness. More interesting is the observation that this Law of Holiness offers special similarities to Ezekiel, and especially to his last nine chapters. There is very much in common between the language of the two documents; the subject-matter is to a large extent the same. The characteristic views of Ezekiel, as for example the importance of the temple as the centre of the holiness of the land and the nation, the importance of the land to Yahweh even when the nation is removed from it, the representation of idolatry as 'whoredom,' the tracing back of national disobedience to Egypt, explicit references to the sacrifice of children, emphasis on the sabbath, and the view that the transgression of commands, whether moral or ritual, defiles the land, are all prominent in these later chapters of Leviticus—far more prominent than elsewhere. These facts have led some to consider that

[1] Lev. xvi. [2] xvii–xxvi.

Ezekiel must have been the author of the chapters in question. But on the other hand there are certain features in each of the documents which do not appear in the other; in Leviticus, for instance, the distinction between priests and Levites does not appear, although the high-priest is mentioned in Lev. xxi. 10-15. The question of the actual relation between them is so difficult that it is still quite uncertain which was written first, and even how much of these and other chapters of Leviticus is to be regarded as included in the 'Book of Holiness[1].' What is certain is that the same period in history and the same circle of thought saw the appearance of both Ezekiel's sketch and the Law of Holiness, just as at an earlier period an equally earnest group of minds had produced the Deuteronomic code. Clearly, these men of the first half of the exile, deeply impressed as they were with the importance of priestly tradition and ceremonial, felt that Deuteronomy was now insufficient. With a faith as courageous as that of Jeremiah when he bought the land on which the Chaldaeans were encamped[2], they set themselves to legislate for a time when the restoration—impossible as it seemed to others—should be complete, and when the restored people should show a zeal for religion and an obedience to their own amended provisions never realized before, but—such was the real miracle—actually attained in the years to come!

It would, however, be a mistake to think of Ezekiel merely as one of a group or school. His conservatism is

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[1] See the full bibliography in *Enc. Bibl.*, art. Leviticus. Smend and H. P. Smith hold that Lev. xvii-xxvi (H) is later than Ezekiel; G. F. Moore, that H preceded Ezekiel by half a century; Baentzsch believes part of H to have been written before Ezekiel and part afterwards.

[2] Jer. xxxii. 6 ff.; compare the story of the putting up to auction in Rome of the land occupied by Hannibal's camp, Livy, xxvi. 11. Compare also Victor Hugo, 'Time present works for time to come; work, then, and hope. Such is Ezekiel's cry.'

far more than the love of the old simply because it is old. His plan for the rebuilt temple contains several striking innovations upon established custom [1]. On its walls he even refuses to allow gold—a vast difference from Solomon here; and in its sacrifices he will have no wine. This is the conservatism of the radical reformer. To him, gold and wine are both full of the suggestions of the Canaanite influence, against which his work is one long protest. They may have all the weight of prescription in their favour; but if they spell heathenish associations, he will have none of them. Equally striking is his calm neglect of the royal house. True, in the earlier part of the book 'my servant David' is referred to [2], but never in words which, like those of Isaiah or Micah, suggest a crown and a throne. His lament over the princes of Josiah's house is full of pathetic beauty; but his condemnation of the attempts at oriental tyranny by the kings is sternness itself; and in providing only for the prince in his new constitution, he goes back to 1 Sam. xii and the earlier ideal of the theocracy. He leaves little place for the Messiah of Isaiah.

Equal originality of mind is shown by Ezekiel in his conception of the stream which is to issue forth from the temple in the golden age of the future. To us, the picture of the rapidly deepening waters, flowing, as it seems, without the smallest consideration of geographical conditions, into the Dead Sea, is somewhat grotesque. So is the celestial chariot of the first chapter, if we try to picture all its details to our minds together. But we must remember the precise quality of the Hebrew imagination. Strikingly powerful in brief comparisons and parables —glances, as it were, into an ideal world—it is generally incapable of the sustained effort which can weld the various elements of its picture into an artistic and consistent whole. From the parallel inability to plan out

[1] See esp. notes at end of xliii.
[2] See notes on xxxiv. 23, 24.

a whole work Ezekiel is remarkably free. Perhaps it would be truer to say that a picture of which the parts cannot be joined together was no more objectionable to the Semitic mind than the combinations of man and eagle or ox in the Assyrian sculptures. The important point is the symbolism. R. H. Hutton[1] has remarked that there is no real nature poetry in the Old Testament, because the poets insist on passing immediately to the contemplation of nature's Creator and Ruler. Neither Ezekiel nor his readers will be distressed by the physiographical difficulties of the picture of the renewed Jerusalem and its environs; but they will be impressed by the thought that from the very centre of Yahweh's holiness flows forth the stream that makes the land as completely in accord with the spirit of Yahweh's law as are his servants. How natural for the lover of 'the mountains of Israel' to send the river of purification through their midst. In the visions of a later time, which owed more of their inspiration to Ezekiel than to any other writing, that river became the river of water of life, on whose banks grew the tree of life whose leaves were for the healing of the nations.

V. Ezekiel's Conception of God.

We now come to what is really the most important part of our consideration of Ezekiel; every prophet, like every religious teacher, must finally be judged by what he has to tell us about the mind and will and character of God.

The foundation of the prophetic message is the sentence in which Judaism has found its brief but comprehensive creed, 'Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God is one Yahweh[2].' It is the creed of what may be termed National Monotheism; Yahweh is Israel's God, and Yahweh, unlike the Baals of the heathen world, is God alone. The two statements combined in this creed Ezekiel of course

[1] *Literary Essays*, 'The Poetry of the Old Testament.'
[2] Deut. vi. 4, known in Judaism as the 'Shema' ('hear').

holds as firmly as any of his fellows. Attempts have been made to eliminate from the earlier prophets the most strikingly monotheistic language, as the result of later editing, but for the most part on very slender grounds. When all has been subtracted which critical ingenuity can question, it remains the fact that the prophets could not have written as they have done unless they were convinced that Yahweh, and Yahweh alone, was supreme over Israel and its destinies, over the nations around, and over the future of the world. Once admit this, and there is no need to quarrel about the doxologies in Amos.

What then was the superstructure which Ezekiel built on this foundation? At first sight, some would say, 'it seems hardly worth the raising. The character of Yahweh, as Ezekiel conceives it, strikes us as narrow and forbidding. The message he confides to Ezekiel is one long harsh and threatening complaint. He is never tired of rebuking the 'rebellious house,' and speedily quenches what natural pity Ezekiel himself feels towards his countrymen. Again, the sins which rouse his anger are ritual as much as moral; the two are constantly combined; and instead of the soul-stirring ethical denunciations of the earlier prophets, which appeal unfalteringly to the universal consciousness of humanity, we are compelled to listen to attacks on Israel for having offered sacrifice at the wrong places or by the wrong people.

There is also a marked tone of self-assertiveness in Yahweh's words as we read them here. This tone, indeed, meets us elsewhere; most readers of the Old Testament have felt surprised that the gracious and long-suffering Shepherd of Israel should condescend to rate his people for not giving him all his due honour, and to upbraid them for the crime of *lèse-majesté*, much as we might conceive the feudal God of Anselm to have done. But Ezekiel goes further. The conclusion of one oracle after another, 'that they may know that I am Yahweh,' suggests that self-assertion was the sole end alike of

punishment and of mercy. When some gracious promise is announced, Yahweh is quick to add 'not for your sakes do I this, but for mine own name's sake,' destroying in a breath the gratitude that might have risen in response. The very miseries of the exile are turned into an aggravation of the guilt of Israel, for their result has been the pollution of Yahweh's name among the Gentiles, and when this pollution has come to an end by the return from Babylon, the survivors will only be plagued into self-loathing by the memory of the sins which had driven them from the land.

Further, there would seem to be still darker traits in Ezekiel's portraiture of Yahweh. If a selfish or avaricious prophet is deceived as to the future, and so leads astray the unfortunate people who inquire of him, it is Yahweh who has deceived the man; and Yahweh himself accepts the responsibility for the cruel customs which ordained the slaughter of the first-born in Israel: 'I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgements wherein they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts[1].' Even some who would not go as far as Duhm, and assert that Ezekiel has brought no new idea to prophecy, have felt that in the mind of Ezekiel Yahweh is not unlike the God of the crudest Calvinism, in whose arbitrary will alone stands whatever distinction exists between right and wrong, whose chief demand is for servile reverence, who exults in punishment as the most convincing exhibition of his own might, and who, if he spares, is simply actuated by some further plan for his own glorification.

Let us admit the plausibility of this view; let us admit also that it contains many elements of truth, and that Ezekiel lived in a world quite familiar with views which are entirely foreign to us. It is none the less true that the main attribute of Yahweh in Ezekiel's eyes is not any one of those which we have mentioned; it is his

[1] xx. 25, 26.

holiness; and in the mind of Ezekiel holiness sums up all physical, moral, and religious worth, and is the precise opposite of all that is mean or loathsome[1]. 'For my name's sake' means, therefore, 'for the sake of all that is worth having or being,'—as we might say, 'in the name of morality, humanity, and religion.' To prevent the pollution of Yahweh's name is necessarily the highest possible motive, because such pollution is nothing but the tainting of purity itself with corruption, calling good evil and evil good, giving sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet, and summoning 'red ruin and the breaking up of laws.'

To assure Israel that her restoration was demanded by the vindication of Yahweh's honour was to give, not only the most majestic, but the most satisfying promise. 'Your return,' Ezekiel was saying in reality, 'is not the result of any sudden and capricious veering of divine favour; it is the effect (to put the matter into modern language) of the eternal and immutable laws of truth and right.' The prediction that Israel would loathe herself for her old sins is not the sign of a power which grudged the happiness it could not altogether withhold; it is rather the highest promise, that Israel would then understand the foundation of all true happiness, and therefore would never again fall into the sins which had previously made such happiness an impossible dream. God has no higher gift to a man than the state of grace in which he calls himself 'less than the least of all saints,' and even 'the chief of sinners.'

The position of Ezekiel and of those who thought and felt with him was not unlike that of a Puritan in the seventeenth century. The Puritan too was a Calvinist, but his Calvinism was a keener spur to set a wrong world right, and a clearer illumination of the hidden love of a holy God, than the world had ever known before. Ezekiel had lived through his Revolution, and the establishment

[1] This is the real significance of the theophany in chap. i: see the notes thereon; also pp. 23, 24.

of the Kingdom of Saints, in 621 B.C.; he had found his Cromwell in Josiah; he had witnessed a Stuart reaction under Josiah's degenerate sons; perhaps Pelatiah was another Samuel Butler, with all the malice, but none of the wit, needed to make him the author of another *Hudibras*.

Rightly to understand what Yahweh's holiness meant to Ezekiel, we must have undergone Ezekiel's experiences; we must have seen the women weeping for Tammuz, and bringing to the crowds who thronged the temple courts at Jerusalem all the lewd ideas of the baser Oriental mythology; we must have watched the twenty-five men deliberately defying Yahweh in Yahweh's own house, or Nebuchadnezzar plying his divinations to decide whether Judah or Ammon should be his first victim. We must have marked with scorn and fear like Ezekiel's the degraded yet alluring idolatries of heathenism, so dangerous because so similar to the rites to which Israel had already been accustoming herself for years in Palestine; we must have grown indignant over the torrent of commercial dishonesty and greed which had swept away the remnants of the old Israelite simplicity and goodness, and wept in anguish at the thought that the city which had been created to be the joy of the whole earth, had been humbled by the wicked folly of her own children before the derision and contempt of the heathen world. To Ezekiel, unable to distinguish between the ritual and moral elements in religion, the practices which he saw around him were abominations as horrible as sacrilege and incest are to us.

But there is another side to Ezekiel's conception of Yahweh, which we discover where we least expect it. The interpretation of Yahweh's holiness which we have been considering culminates in the terrible sixteenth and twenty-third chapters, and yet those chapters contain something very different as well. No one can read them without being reminded of Hosea's touching picture of the wandering

and restored wife. Ezekiel seems to write without a spark of Hosea's tenderness ; and he ends, not with the gentle note of alluring, albeit into the wilderness, but with harsh rebukes and threats. And yet Yahweh does restore ; he confesses himself bound to do so ; and no sooner has the middle chapter of the book been passed than Ezekiel sets himself to describe how Yahweh brings forth the new order. Though the wicked man must die, Yahweh has no pleasure in his death[1]. Israel has sinned ; and though she must suffer, the real responsibility shall fall on the shoulders of those who led her astray[2], after which the showers of blessing will at last be able to fall plenteously on the thirsty land.

Is not all this in contradiction to the first half of the book? Is not Ezekiel now giving us a different picture of Yahweh? By no means. He has gazed firmly on the worst. He has no illusions or unverifiable hopes. Unlike the prophet of the second half of the exile, he has heard no rumour of Cyrus ; the power of Nebuchadnezzar stands unshaken—so strong that Ezekiel himself never explicitly foretells its downfall. The condition of Israel is not yet instinct with new-born hope; the exiles speak of themselves only as a mass of dried-up bones. And yet, as if Babylon had never existed, and as if a stone of the walls of Jerusalem had never fallen, Ezekiel sets himself deliberately to follow out the new order of things in Yahweh's mind.

To this task he devotes himself with striking sobriety. He cannot think of Yahweh as did the second Isaiah, exhausting the resources of language in the majestic fullness of his promises. Ezekiel had known too well how stern were the facts and necessities of punishment, to feel that Yahweh could speak thus. Nor could he soar to the heights from which Isaiah beheld the return as a triumphal procession across the desert[3]. Ezekiel was

[1] xxxiii. 11. [2] xxxiv. 1–22. [3] Cf. Isa. liv. 10, xl. 4, 5.

at once too practical and too prosaic for this; neither Mendelssohn nor Handel could have set Ezekiel's prophecies to their immortal music. But to Ezekiel, Yahweh is not the God of the poet only, but of the statesman, and —must we not add?—of the theologian. In the mind of Ezekiel, Yahweh does not forget the past, or exchange an attitude of wrath, which for a short time he has maintained, for one of deep and abiding mercy. He is rather the God who fulfils himself in many ways. To such a God, no detail either of the past, the present, or the future can be unimportant. He sees the past as bound to the future. He makes even the failures and shame of the past the foundation of the new city whose name is to bear witness to his abiding presence in her midst. He is not content with the announcement of a mighty promise, nor even with the exhibition of his own mighty hand and outstretched arm; he sees the exact temptations of his people; he saves them therefrom, not by an outward and political change, but by an inward change of heart; and he plans out the means whereby those temptations shall lose all their power to hurt in the future.

Is not this the true interpretation of the ways of God, alike with the nation and with the individual soul? The drama of national repentance which Ezekiel foreshadowed contains the type of all true repentance,—of the passing from the old life to the new. However clearly marked may be the moment of conversion, it does but join together two lives. The second life is best lived by the man who has most fully learnt the lesson of the first. When Paul, in the seventh chapter of Romans, speaks of a man chained to a body of death, is he thinking of his experience before conversion or after it? We cannot tell, because Paul could not. He had passed through that experience, and it lived. Ezekiel places himself at the moment of the nation's conversion. Over that conversion Yahweh is presiding. When Ezekiel set in order the first half of his book, he knew what was coming in the second; when he

set in order the second, he did not forget the words which Yahweh had uttered in his ears long before. Man's conversion is the vindication of God's holiness [1].

In this way Ezekiel, more fully than any other writer of the Old Testament, reveals what is the true 'work of faith,' the 'reasonable service [2].' There is but one gap in his prophecy,—the gap which his great companion of the exile partially filled, the picture of him who said, 'for their sakes I sanctify myself (make myself holy), that they also might be sanctified through the truth [3].' We have hinted at a parallel between Ezekiel and Dante [4]. The parallel is closer than might at first sight appear. Ezekiel has gazed into an Inferno as weird and terrible as Dante's; upon the top of the mountain and the whole limit round about, which was most holy, he has seen and sketched out a Paradise of order and harmony as satisfying as that which Beatrice revealed to Dante; and in his analysis of the wrath of God, which heals while it punishes, and of the fears of men, which change from the tormenting terror of punishment to the shrinking dread of the polluting touch of sin, he reaches a height of spiritual experience unsurpassed by Dante, with all the New Testament behind him.

VI. Date, Canonicity, and Text of the Book.

There is no problem of Ezekiel in the sense that there are problems of Isaiah, the Psalms, or the Pentateuch. The few attempts that have been made to question the authenticity of any part of the book, save isolated verses, have been their own refutation. Three questions, however, demand some brief notice before we pass to the book itself.

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[1] Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.
[2] Rom. xii. 1; 'service' is here a distinctly ritual word.
[3] John xvii. 19.
[4] See also Elvet Lewis, *By the River Chebar*, pp. 1, 2.

First, When did Ezekiel's writings assume the shape in which now we have them? All the prophecies are carefully dated; they fall, as we have seen, into two halves, dated respectively before and after the capture of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. But Smend has argued strongly, not only that in its present form the whole book is later than 586, but that the prophecies of the fall of Jerusalem and of the other nations, so far as they were fulfilled, were 'vaticinia ex eventu.' He urges in support of this the strikingly artistic character of the book, the general balance of part with part, the various parables, figures, and discourses which all show to him marks of literary elaboration. It seems to him highly improbable that a prophet's varied activity through a term of years would have had results so harmonious as these, and the presence of sentences like that in chapter xxiii. 36, 'wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah?' seem to imply a note to some contemporary comment rather than that comment itself. The grouping of the oracles against the heathen in the centre of the book he thinks peculiarly suspicious.

In reply, it must be pointed out that the editing of addresses previously made is not the same thing as the reference of addresses to dates when they had not yet been thought of. No one can deny that Ezekiel used a speaker's privilege to polish and edit his previous messages; nor is there anything in the book as we have it to preclude this hypothesis. But to contend that no part of what we have now was written till after 586 is a different matter. Is it such a difficult thing to believe that Ezekiel was assured before that date that Jerusalem would fall? It would be far more difficult to believe that Ezekiel hoped or cared to persuade his contemporaries that he had made a prediction which none of them had ever heard. Their reply would have been too easy and obvious. 'Why did we not know at the time that you saw such a catastrophe to be on its way?' Smend's contention can hardly explain Ezekiel's references to his own conduct and condition previous to

the arrival of the fatal news. Why does Ezekiel make so much of his dumbness if it never happened? and if it did happen, those other prophetic experiences must also have happened which are so closely connected with it. The numerous parabolic actions, the 'toy siege,' the lying on the back, and the digging through the wall, whether we prefer to interpret them literally or not, would at best have a very doubtful significance, and even less literary value, if they were invented years after the time when they were supposed to have taken place. In the face of these difficulties, we may be forgiven for believing that Ezekiel would have rejected any suggestion of such artifice and literary fraud. It is one thing to throw doubt on the traditional account of unnamed and undated fragments of prophetic writing; it is quite another to challenge the carefully dated account which a writer gives of his own works[1].

Strangely enough, the canonicity of the book has been much debated in Jewish circles. One would have thought that a book which bore so clearly the marks of its authorship would have aroused no disputes; and it is quite true that Ezekiel has always been counted one of the three greater prophets, along with Isaiah and Jeremiah; as such he has his place with them in the Hebrew Bible, and he is mentioned along with them in the catalogue of the famous men of old in Ecclesiasticus[2]. In the Talmudic treatise *Baba bathra*, it is stated curiously that the book of Ezekiel was written by the 'men of the great synagogue,' along with Daniel, Esther, and the Minor Prophets. Various doubts are expressed as to its canonicity elsewhere in the Talmud, Proverbs, Esther, and Ecclesiastes being regarded with similar uncertainty. Jerome informs us that the Jewish doctors forbade any one under the age of thirty to read either the beginning and end of the book of Ezekiel or the exordium of Genesis.

[1] See also footnote on p. 5. [2] xlix. 8.

The reason of all this caution is not far to seek. The Jews knew nothing of what we call historical criticism; but the comparative study of the Bible had been carried by them to great lengths, though on what we should consider unscientific methods. They could not therefore fail to notice the grave discrepancies between Ezekiel and parts of the Pentateuch. The conclusion was obvious; 'One of the two must be wrong; it cannot be Moses; it must therefore be Ezekiel.' The Jewish tractate *Hagiga* contains the well-known story that Hananiah, or, as Graetz and Derembourg think more likely, Eleazar ben Hananiah, asked for 300 measures of oil, and forthwith retired to his room with copies of Ezekiel and of the Law; before the oil was finished he had reconciled every discrepancy and indicated the claim of Ezekiel to a place in the canon.

In the Christian Church the book has never been doubted. It is naturally quoted but seldom in the New Testament; its subject-matter is enough to account for this; but the paucity of references elsewhere is more than made up for in the book of Revelation; the finest passages of the seer of Patmos are based, almost verbally, on the closest and most loving study of the prophet of the Babylonian exile.

A third question is more difficult. It concerns the text of the book. Every commentary has pointed out that the textual problems of Ezekiel are as perplexing as the critical questions are simple. The Septuagint translation suggests an exceptional number of variations from the received Hebrew text, which is represented as closely as possible in our Revised Version. It is well known that the character of the Septuagint translation (LXX) as a whole varies greatly in different parts of the Old Testament; in some books it is far more careful and close to the original than in others; in some books, again, it would seem that its original showed distinct differences from our present Hebrew text, while elsewhere the order of verses and even

of chapters differs greatly from our own. In Ezekiel the translation is evidently a very careful one; where the translators misunderstood words they would simply transliterate them [1]; the order of the Hebrew words is often preserved intentionally; and, while a few passages are distinctly free from Hebraisms, literalness is often secured at the cost of idiomatic Greek, as it is also in Aquila's Greek translation of the Old Testament.

But through this very conscientiousness the translators have made it clear that they had before them another text than that which is represented in our English Bible. For while we can generally turn their Greek back into Hebrew with ease, that Hebrew is often strangely different from the text which we possess. Nor is the difference one of accidental 'various readings,' but of character and style. No English reader will fail to notice in this book the number of redundant clauses and repeated sentences, and also the number of almost hopelessly obscure passages. In the Septuagint the obscurities are distinctly fewer, and even where they exist in the Greek, they can sometimes be got rid of by working back through the Greek to the Hebrew; while most of the redundancies and repetitions are cut away, giving an impression of vigour and even, in places, of an epigrammatic terseness of which the English version knows nothing. Further, the received text is found to be the less forcible and vigorous of the two in other ways. Attacks upon Israel's sin, as we find them in the Septuagint, are toned down; weaker expressions take the place of the stronger ones found in the Septuagint [2]; references to heathenism are less explicit [3]; parallels to the Priests' code and the Book of Holiness appear which are

[1] This is especially the case in connexion with Ezekiel's technical terms for portions of the Temple; in one case a false reading which would not make sense was simply transliterated (xli. 8).

[2] v. 16, vii. 24, ix. 1, xviii. 18, xxi. 5, xxxii. 6.

[3] xxxii. 27, &c.

absent in the Septuagint[1]; unfulfilled prophecies, as they appear in the Septuagint, are altered to be consistent with the facts of history[2]; expressions not found in the Septuagint or found there in a different form read like marginal notes which have made their way into the text[3]; while obvious numerical and other errors in the Hebrew are corrected in the Greek version[4].

If we are to assume that we have here two types of text, which is the older? Until lately, it was customary to regard the Septuagint as suspect whenever it differed from the received text; but it is now claiming more and more attention, and the oldest fragment of the text of the Hebrew Bible yet discovered, the Nash Papyrus[5], is certainly nearer to the original of the Septuagint than to the received text. For deciding questions of this kind, we have three canons—the shorter version is preferable to the longer; the harder version is preferable to the easier; and, that version is to be preferred from which the other can be more easily deduced. Now the Septuagint text is certainly the shorter; and to a Jewish reader it is the harder; for its peculiarities are just those which, apparently inconsistent with other parts of the Bible or unsuitable to the dignity of an inspired text, would have caused surprise and scandal to a Jew. Can we then explain the rise of the received text from an original text similar to that represented by the Septuagint? Here, conjecture is our only weapon; but it has been suggested that in the case of this book the difficulties which occasioned its special treatment by the Jewish doctors were also responsible for the systematic alterations of the text. In order that it might not be thrown out of the Canon alto-

[1] xxviii. 13, &c. [2] xxxii. 9, &c.

[3] xvi. 32, xlii. 12, &c. The superiority of the LXX, however, is by no means self-evident in all the above instances.

[4] xlii. 3, 10–12, xlv. 1, 20. In other passages the LXX is obviously wrong, as in xlvii. 8.

[5] Containing the Decalogue and the 'Shema.'

gether, the scribes subjected it to a thorough revision ; its startling brevities were rounded off, its daring references were softened, its objectionable bluntness was smoothed down, its inconsistencies with the Pentateuch, though not removed, were made less glaring, and its allusions to previous history were assimilated to the orthodox views of later times. The result could hardly be altogether successful ; Ezekiel was too forcible and individual a writer to be thus tamed and shorn of his peculiarities ; hence, it is concluded, we are left with a book which exhibits at once prolixity and terseness, obscurity and almost childish simplicity, the powerful expressions of a great and original mind side by side with the cumbrous explanations of an annotator.

Of course to speak with certainty is impossible. It may be that Ezekiel himself, who in so many respects occupied a middle position and reconciled opposites in himself, has exhibited these contradictory characteristics in his own style ; or perhaps, as Kraetzschmar suggests, he was himself responsible for two recensions of his work, subsequently run together. As it must be admitted, the first-mentioned hypothesis assumes that the scribes, at whatever they worked, took considerable liberties with their author ; but from all that we know of the literary activities of later Judaism, it is quite likely that an impressive but difficult author should have been altered and adapted ; the very alterations only leave the text in some places more obscure and inconsistent. Later students would hardly have been able to extract from the Ezekiel of our received text so striking and consistent a literary production as must have been the original of the Septuagint. On the other hand, it is easy to exaggerate the difficulties of the received text and the excellences of the Septuagint's original. It is not probable that any Hebrew prophet wrote with the fear of the standards of German literary criticism before his eyes. That errors should have crept into the text in course of

transmission, or that they should have been left in it by the author, is quite possible; cleverly manipulated, they can be made to suggest a whole series of recensions and editions; but we may be permitted to wonder that with a subject-matter so constantly obscure and involved, the errors or corruptions in the text—call them what we please—are not far more numerous, and, in all but a few passages of special difficulty, far more baffling.

A few words may be added on the literature of the book. Very little has been written upon Ezekiel in English; but what has been written is of a high level. A. B. Davidson's commentary in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools* (1892) is extremely full and judicious; C. H. Toy's commentary (1899) is especially full on points of archaeological interpretation, and is well illustrated; H. A. Redpath has carefully edited the book for the *Westminster Commentaries* series (1907); and J. Skinner's volume on Ezekiel in the *Expositor's Bible* is rich in suggestiveness. The text has also been carefully but boldly edited by Toy for Haupt's *Polychrome Old Testament* (1899). The articles on Ezekiel by Skinner in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary* and Toy in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* outline the most recent discussions of the problems raised by the book. A very careful discussion of Ezekiel's conception of Holiness (repeated in great part from his commentary) will be found in Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament.* Elvet Lewis's *By the River Chebar* suggests some of the uses to which Ezekiel may be put in popular exposition. Even in Germany much less attention has been given to Ezekiel than to most of the larger books of the Old Testament. Passing by the learned but now largely antiquated work of Hitzig, Hengstenberg, Keil, and others (although Hitzig especially will be found to be still fresh and stimulating), the first important commentary written from a modern standpoint is that of Smend (1880), the author of the *History of the Development of the Religion*

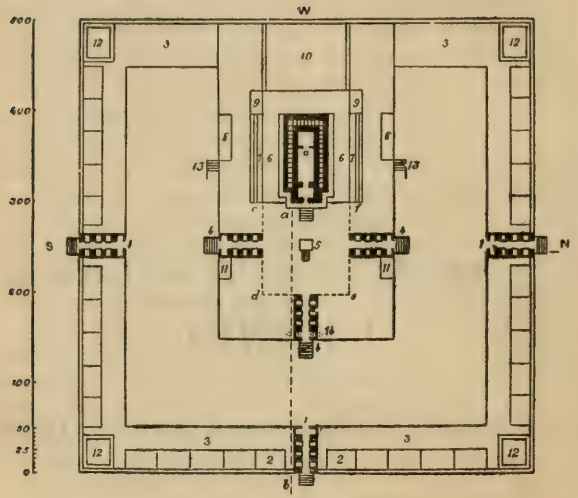
of Israel; he is strongest in the light he throws on Ezekiel's prophecies from contemporary and previous religious history, and vice versa. He was followed by Cornill (1886), who confesses the fascination which the prophet had exercised on him for years before he published his book, and who, 'treating Ezekiel like a Latin or Greek classic,' has devoted his chief attention to a reconstruction of the text on the basis of the Septuagint. H. Klostermann, in *Studien und Kritiken* (1877), and D. H. Müller in his *Ezekielstudien* (1895), have contributed suggestive monographs to the text, as also Kühn ('Ezekiel's vision of the Temple,' 1882), and Gautier (1891). During the last ten years there have appeared commentaries by Bertholet (1897), who has also produced a pamphlet on Ezekiel's sketch of the future Israel, *Hesekiel's Verfassungsentwurf* (1896), and Kraetzschmar (1900). Cornill's work has within the last year been carried much further by O. Jahn, who has produced a text admittedly founded on the Septuagint. The study of the Septuagint is even now nearer its beginning than its end; and our growing knowledge of the Babylonian surroundings of Ezekiel is probably destined to have a great effect on our interpretation of his work in the future.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

EZEKIEL

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

Plan A. The Temple.



1. Gates into outer court (3), xl. 6.
2. Chambers in outer court (30), xl. 17.
3. Pavement, xl. 18.
4. Gates into inner court (3), xl. 28.
5. Altar of burnt offering, xliii. 13.
6. 'Separate place,' xli. 10.
7. Larger blocks, containing priests' chambers, xlii. 1.
8. Smaller do., xlii. 1.
9. Priests' kitchens (? 2), xlvi. 19.
10. Hinder building, xli. 12.
11. Chambers for priests (2), xl. 44.
12. People's kitchens (4), xlvi. 21.
13. Priests' steps from outer to inner court, xlii. 9.

At 14 are shown the positions of the sacrificial tables at the east inner gate, xl. 41.

The dotted line *a . . . b* represents the course of the temple stream, xlvii. 1.

Ezekiel does not mention whether there was any wall corresponding to the conjectural line *c–d–e–f*.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

EZEKIEL

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth 1

Part I.

Section I. The Prophet's Call (i–iii).

Chapter i, after a brief introduction, describes the vision which preluded Ezekiel's whole prophetic activity. Isaiah and Jeremiah each saw a vision of Yahweh (Isa. vi. 1; Jer. i. 20), and Amos begins his prophecies with what may have been a direct 'vision' (it must be remembered that the word 'vision' always includes hearing as well as sight: cf. Mic. i. 1). Isaiah's vision reminds us also of that of Micaiah the son of Imlah (1 Kings xxii. 17 ff.). But in each of these cases the description suggests that the prophet has seen more than he will or can say (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 2); here Ezekiel is full even to prolixity. It is customary to find in this characteristic a mark of the decadence of prophecy. This is hardly fair; we do not call one poet less great than another because he describes at length what another only sketches or hints at; nor do we regard Dante, because of the fullness of his descriptions, as at a lower level than Milton. We see here in this first chapter exactly the same precise love of detail as in ch. xl. ff., or in ch. xxix. What was the origin of the vision? Did Ezekiel see in a trance exactly what he here describes? This is difficult to suppose, because the details show an obviously 'theological' purpose, and they are almost too complex to be worked out. On the other hand we can hardly set down the whole as a literary fiction; throughout the book Ezekiel makes a clear distinction between what he attributes to vision and what is left to waking consciousness. All the visions described by Ezekiel must be judged together. When we compare them, we find as characteristic of them all (1) a greater clearness and vividness than Ezekiel in other moments seems to command; (2) a precision of detail which surprises us in the description of a vision; and (3) the strict subordination of the parts to the prophet's hortatory purpose. All this points to the conclusion that the visions had a real origin in the prophet's abnormal experiences[1]: that their contents were

[1] Cf. Stewart, J. A. (*Myths of Plato*): 'The effect of even the most sustained poetry is a succession of occasional lapses into the

month, in the fifth *day* of the month, as I was among the

suggested by what was already in his thoughts; that these thoughts gained a new sharpness of outline in his trance-consciousness, and that the description of the visions themselves would be influenced by the purpose for which he felt they had been given to him. Cf. introductory notes to chaps. xl–xlviii, pp. 26 ff.

What was the purpose, the lesson of this theophany? Its leading characters are majesty and mobility (contr. xliii. 7). The glory of God would naturally be prominent to any one who had pondered over the prophecies of Isaiah and the Book of Deuteronomy; the mobility of the throne-car which carried Yahweh's presence would as naturally impress one who had learnt to think of Yahweh's glory as filling the whole earth, and had felt, in exile, the special need for that glory to manifest itself outside Palestine. The details of the theophany are suggested partly by Isaiah's vision, partly by the appearance of God to Moses and the elders of Israel (Exod. xxiv), and partly by reminiscences of Solomon's Temple. Each detail has its special religious significance. In chap. x we have another account of the theophany, differing in several details. Such differences, if our account of the version is right, are perfectly natural.

i. 1–3. *Introduction and Title.*

1. At the very beginning of the book we are met by the question of editing. Verses 2 and 3 cannot be by the author of verse 1; against this is the change of person, the repetition, and the obvious connexion between verses 1 and 4. Ewald regarded verses 2 and 3 as a later insertion, Cornill as the original opening. Ezekiel himself in the rest of the book uniformly employs the first person, as in verse 1, while the dating of verse 3, unlike that of verse 1, is the dating of the rest of the book. Which is the addition, then, and how shall we account for it? The most probable explanation is that here, as elsewhere, we have a trace of the two recensions of the book (see Introd. p. 46), one embodied in the Massoretic text, and represented in our English translations; the other in the LXX. Here the two appear together. Of these two, the second (LXX) is the more direct and concise; hence, verse 1 would seem to belong to this recension, verses 2 and 3 being the introduction of a later editor to the book as

state of dream-consciousness. . . . The more we habituate ourselves to the influence of the poets, the better are we likely to receive the message of the prophets.' Stewart thinks that Plato's 'myths' were actually spoken by Socrates with a special impressiveness of tone and gesture. Did Ezekiel describe his visions in this manner?

captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth *day* of the 2
month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's

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a whole. What, then, of 'the thirtieth year'? No completely satisfactory suggestion has yet been made. The real date, as we know from verse 2, is 592 B. C. Ezekiel can hardly be using a Babylonian era, such as the accession of Nabopolassar (in 625 B. C.), nor that of Nebuchadnezzar (in 605 B. C.; 10×3 being mistaken for 10+3); nor, again, is it likely that he is dating his work from the discovery of Deuteronomy and the reform of Josiah, in 621 B. C. Bertholet has suggested that Ezekiel (or his editor) arrived at the number 30 by subtracting from 70 (the length of the exile as given by Jeremiah, xxv. 21) 40 (the length as given by Ezekiel himself, iv. 6). Is it possible, as Kraetzschmar and Budde suggest (though Davidson strongly opposes), that the prophet is really referring to his own age? if so, however, it must be admitted that no other prophet does this; and that the Hebrew as it stands now must have been slightly altered; further, his position among the exiles might seem to indicate a maturer age (cf. note on verse 3).

the captives: R. V. marg. 'captivity.' The use of this expression, as also the word 'among,' shows that the exiles had already formed a definite social community of their own. See Introd. p. 15. Of this community Ezekiel would appear to be a member: cf. iii. 15, viii. 1, xiv. 1, &c.

the river Chebar: this is not to be identified with the Chaboras (in Northern Mesopotamia), to which the exiles from the Northern Kingdom were carried in 722 B. C. (2 Kings xvii. 6, xviii. 11; 1 Chron. v. 26, 'Habor'); this would conflict with 'the land of the Chaldaeans' (verse 3). Probably it was merely one of the numerous canals of the country. A large canal near Nippur or Niffer was called the Ka-ba-ri (the 'Grand Canal'), possibly the present Shatt-en-Nil, 120 feet wide, close to which were discovered the archives of the wealthy banking house of Murašû and Sons (dated 464 to 405 B. C.), which contain many Jewish names.

the heavens were opened: cf. Matt. iii. 16; John i. 51; also Rev. iv. 1, xix. 11. The visions in the Apocalypse are full of reminiscences of Ezekiel.

2. All the time reckonings in the rest of the book follow that of this verse, i. e. the dates are reckoned from the 'captivity.' Does this mean the actual conquest of the city at the close of the three months' reign of Jehoiachin (in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxiv. 12)? The safest starting-point is the fall of the city, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah and the nineteenth of Nebuchad-

3 captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly unto
Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the
Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the
4 LORD was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold,

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nezzar; i. e. 586 (July) : see Chronological Table, note 2. The siege lasted a year and seven months (2 Kings xxv. 1, 8) ; i. e. it commenced in the ninth year, tenth month (*loc. cit.*, and Ezek. xxiv. 1) ; i. e. Jan. 587 ; hence (if we may insert in this verse, which omits the number of the month, 'in the fourth month' from verse 1) the date here given will be July 592. The captivity itself will then be dated March 596, which (since 2 Kings xxv. 1 = Ezek. xxiv. 1) will be the actual date of Zedekiah's accession. For this captivity, see Introd. p. 13. Although Jerusalem survived the blow, it was really a far more important event than the captivity which followed the city's fall; it would also naturally be '*the* captivity' to those who had then been deported. (The number of captives deported in 597 was 3,320 ; in 586, only 832 : see Jer. lii. 28.) Thirteen dates are given by Ezekiel in the course of the book ; we are not justified in taking it for granted that all the prophecies which are placed at present between any two dates were actually delivered in that interval ; but most if not all the dates evidently mark turning-points or transitions in the prophecies.

3. the word of the LORD. The expression regularly includes what is seen as well as what is heard.

came expressly. A phrase, not elsewhere employed by Ezekiel, which denotes the impressiveness of this experience.

Ezekiel. The name means 'God is strong.' Neither Ezekiel nor Buzi are mentioned elsewhere. The words 'the priest,' as far as the Hebrew goes, may be joined either to Ezekiel or to Buzi. Whether Ezekiel was too young to have exercised priestly functions himself or not, his whole attitude shows that he came of a priestly family, and that he belonged further to the Jerusalem priesthood, the family of Zadok (chaps. xl. 46, xliii. 19, xliv. 15) ; he must also have been perfectly familiar with the temple and its sacrifices. For deciding his age (see on verse 1) we have no sufficient grounds ; but it may be pointed out that though the last nine chapters of the book are dated twenty years later than this, there are no signs of old age there. He would not, at this time, be much older than forty, and therefore he could not long have acted as priest in Jerusalem in any case.

the hand of the LORD was upon me: almost a technical term in this book, denoting a condition more or less approaching ecstasy ; it occurs again in iii. 14, 22, viii. 1, xxxiii. 22, xxxvii. 1,

a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire infolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. And out of the midst thereof 5

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xl. 1. The phrase also occurs, but without any suggestion of ecstasy, in Isa. viii. 11.

i. 4–14. *The vision of the living creatures and the chariot.*

4. The LXX has a slightly simpler order; the wind, the clouds, the light, the fire like lightning, and the appearance of amber in the midst of it. The sight gradually gains in distinctness before the prophet. Compare the accounts of St. Paul's visions in Acts ix, xxii, xxvi.

a stormy wind. Yahweh is constantly connected with storm and cloud; cf. especially Ps. xxix, Exod. ix. 24, Judges v. 4 and Ps. xviii. 7 ff.

the north. It has been suggested that Ezekiel is here thinking of Assyrian mythology, which placed the abode of the gods in the north, or of the dim region of gloom and wrath from which Gog is to emerge in chap. xxxviii; the former may possibly be alluded to in Ps. xlviii. 2, but hardly here. Ezekiel makes many mythological references, but he keeps them carefully within the region of poetry (see on next verse). D. H. Müller points out that the road from Palestine would reach Babylonia via the north of the Syrian desert; but this is surely an even less happy suggestion. Would Yahweh's chariot travel down the great caravan roads? Probably the wind which threw Ezekiel into his trance really did blow from the north. The significance for Ezekiel was that Jerusalem was now doomed to be deserted; although the hand of Yahweh could carry him thither again before the city was finally left.

amber, or as R. V. marg. 'electrum.' The Hebrew is *chasmal.* The word is generally explained as denoting a mixture of gold and silver. Thothmes mentions 'asmal' as taken in tribute from Mesopotamia. The Babylonian 'ešmarû' is used for the material which covers the floor of the divine chambers. The word occurs also in i. 27 and viii. 2. Delitzsch compares the Old French *émail,* which, however, has quite a different origin, and is connected with our own word 'smelt.'

out of the midst of the fire. Possibly a gloss; such repetitions are very frequent in Ezekiel; but it is easier to put them down as glosses than to understand how they could be inserted, unless we may assume that a peculiar love of fullness of expression was characteristic of the editor of the later recension.

came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was
6 their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And
every one had four faces, and every one of them had four

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5. four living creatures. After the natural phenomena Ezekiel sees what is supernatural. The frequency of the words 'likeness,' 'appearance' is noteworthy through this chapter. Cf. 'What seemed his head the likeness of a kingly crown had on.' Ezekiel is anxious to avoid anything implying that Yahweh could be material; a similar anxiety has removed all traces of 'anthropomorphism' from the later or 'Priestly' history of Jewish origins. In chaps. ix and x these living creatures (cf. Rev. iv. 6) are called cherubim. Cheyne thinks this implies that Ezekiel did not recognize them to be cherubim till he was told, and that they were therefore different from the traditional cherubim, referred to in chap. xxviii and represented in the temples both of Solomon and of Ezekiel himself (1 Kings vi. 24; Ezek. xli. 18). These living creatures have often been compared to the twiformed animals of Assyrian mythology; but the care with which Ezekiel describes them, and the symbolism of every feature, shows that at most the gigantic Assyrian man-headed bulls or eagle-headed men gave him no more than suggestions for his conception. The reader may recall Ruskin's description of the 'true' and 'false' griffin in *Modern Painters*, part IV, chap. viii. § 13; in the *Commedia, Purgatorio* xxix, Dante models his description of the living creatures who surrounded the gryphon's car partly from this chapter, partly from Rev. iv. 7 ff.

of a man. Toy has suggested that the true reading should be 'they had forms of one kind.' It is better to take the text as we have it, and to understand that Ezekiel means to emphasize the human rather than the animal character of the bearers of Yahweh's chariot.

6. Ezekiel keeps clearly before us the squareness of the chariot and of its bearers, as later on of the temple. In Solomon's and Ezekiel's temples the cherubim have but two faces; but it would seem that here everything connected with the glory of God must face all sides alike. By using the dual for 'wings,' the Hebrew is able to show that the wings went in pairs, which Jahn would interpret as meaning that there were four pairs of wings, i. e. eight in all, to each creature. Ezekiel would surely have expressed so curious a meaning in a clearer fashion; and we should have to credit the seraphs in Isa. vi. 2 with twelve wings apiece.

7. The number of feet is not mentioned. Davidson suggests two; Kraetzschmar, one each; so that the chariot would have four supports in all. The word 'feet' here stands for 'legs'; the

wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of 7
their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they
sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they 8
had the hands of a man under their wings on their four
sides: and they four had their faces and their wings *thus*;
their wings were joined one to another; they turned not 9
when they went; they went every one straight forward.
As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a 10
man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right
side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side;
they four had also the face of an eagle. And their faces 11
and their wings were separate above; two *wings* of every

legs have no joints, as they move without bending; the 'soles' are like those of calves, i. e. rounded, for turning smoothly in every direction. Yahweh must be entirely unimpeded in his own movements.

8, 9. The description is not clear. For 8b and 9 the LXX has simply 'the faces of the four did not turn as they went; each went straight forward.' It is not easy to see what would be meant by the turning of the wings. Apparently, each of the four creatures was in the centre of a side of the square, with two wings on either side; the wings of the creatures would meet at the corners of the square; so in verse 11. See Plan G.

10. The human face is the most important. Why were these three animals chosen? Jeremias points out that four great Babylonian deities—Marduk, Nebo, Nergal, and Ninib—were represented by an ox, a man, a lion, and an eagle respectively. Such animal figures would be among the most likely to occur, in any case, to an inhabitant of Babylon; a similar combination, however, is found in Solomon's temple (1 Kings vii. 29). If the human face was on the outside, that of the eagle would be on the inside, and hardly seen; the other two would be seen in profile. In Indian mythology, an eagle accompanies Vishnu, a bull Siva.

11. Cf. Isa. vi. 2; in the case of each creature two wings are stretched out; in Isaiah's vision four wings cover different parts of the body, here only two; the wings of the four living creatures would join at the tips. It can hardly be doubted that Ezekiel is here influenced by his memories of Solomon's temple. In the inner shrine, a cube of 20 cubits or 35 feet[1] (1 Kings vi. 23–8),

[1] Reckoning the cubit at 21 inches: see note on xl. 5.

one were joined one to another, and two covered their
12 bodies. And they went every one straight forward:
whither the spirit was to go, they went; they turned not
13 when they went. As for the likeness of the living

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was the ark, and on either side of the ark stood a colossal cherub, 10 cubits high; one of his outspread wings (5 cubits long) touched the wall of the shrine; the other, just over the ark, met the wing of the other cherub; the two figures thus formed a sort of screen right across the shrine. (In the tabernacle, the ark was said to be surmounted by two small cherubs, Exod. xxv. 20.) In Ezekiel's vision, wherein Yahweh has left the temple, the chariot has taken the place of the ark[1]; but the cherubs are still brought into the closest possible connexion with it; and instead of two standing side by side, Ezekiel sees four at right angles to each other. If the figures preserve the dimensions already familiar to Ezekiel, each side of the square chariot will be 10 cubits, or nearly 18 feet long. Cf. Ps. xviii. 10; notes on ix. 3, x. 20, and W. T. Davison's excursus on the Cherubim in CENTURY BIBLE, *Psalms*, vol. i. p. 361.

12. straight forward. The chariot can thus only move at right angles, not diagonally (cf. verse 9); since the chariot is supported by four creatures, every one of which has four faces, there can, strictly speaking, be neither backwards nor forwards nor sideways in its movement.

the spirit. The same word means also wind. (Cf. 'The wind was in their wings,' Zech. v. 9.) Here, however, the reference is certainly to the Spirit, or active principle of God's existence. (See A. B. Davidson's *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 120 f.) Ezekiel gives special prominence to the Spirit; he is himself transported by the Spirit from one place to another (iii. 12, 24, viii. 3, xxxvii. 1, xliii. 5), and by the wind he expresses the life-giving Spirit which turns dry bones into a living army. Here, God's own Spirit, like wind, guides the chariot. Cf. John iii. 8.

13. likeness. 'Likeness,' or 'appearance,' must be wrong. The text of LXX (in R. V. margin), 'in the midst of the living creatures was an appearance,' &c., is to be preferred. Cf. x. 2, 6. Another reminiscence of Isaiah's vision. The chariot has within it what appear to be coals, as if it were an altar. For the movement of fire, compare the 'flaming sword' of the cherubim, in

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[1] It has recently been suggested that the ark, which is never heard of after the destruction of Jerusalem, was regarded as Yahweh's throne within the temple; the older view that the ark was a wooden chest is probably correct, but this is not inconsistent with the conception of a seat, on which Yahweh is enthroned between the cherubs.

creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches; it went up and down among the living creatures: and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living 14
creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. Now as I beheld the living creatures, 15
behold one wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, for each of the four faces thereof. The appearance 16
of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their

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Gen. iii. 24; for fire as accompanying the theophany, cf. Ps. xviii. 13.

14. This verse is omitted in LXX. It adds little to the description, and the word for 'lightning' does not occur elsewhere (in verse 13 the word employed is the regular one); it is not unlike an Arabic or Persian word for a kind of hawk. The word for 'ran' is also non-existent elsewhere. The whole verse reads like a late addition based on a misunderstanding of verse 13.

i. 15-21. *The wheels.* The difficulty of harmonizing each part of the description with the rest is natural if Ezekiel is describing each part of the vision as it entered into his trance-consciousness.

15. wheels. A new element in the vision. Nothing corresponding to these was seen by Isaiah; but it may be that Ezekiel was influenced by reminiscences of the vessels or 'bases' of bronze in Solomon's temple, on the borders of which were lions, oxen, and cherubim, and each of which had four bronze wheels (1 Kings vii. 27-30). In the Book of Enoch (lxi. 10, lxx. 7) the 'Ophannim' (wheels) stand next to the Cherubim and Seraphim in the presence of God.

faces. LXX has 'for the four of them.' The Hebrew has 'for its four faces.' This may be because the four creatures are here thought of as one (Smend), or the mistake may have arisen from reading, as the last letter in this verse, what was originally the first letter, the copula, in the next. See note on verse 16.

16. The repeated 'appearance' and 'work' are strange, as also is 'work' in the first clause; in the last it means 'arrangement' or 'plan,' as in 1 Kings vii. 28. LXX omits 'work' in the first case and 'appearance' in the second.

beryl: *lit.* 'the eye of Tarshish,' generally identified with the chrysolite, which corresponds to our topaz; it occurs again in xxviii. 13.

appearance and their work was as it were a wheel within
17 a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four
18 sides: they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were high and dreadful; and they four had
19 their rings full of eyes round about. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the
20 wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; thither was the spirit to go: and the wheels were lifted up beside them; for the spirit of the living
21 creature was in the wheels. When those went, these

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a wheel within a wheel: more literally, 'as if the wheel should be in the midst of the wheel'; i.e. 'the wheels were arranged as if one wheel were inside the other.' What is meant by this? Probably, as Davidson suggests, each wheel was really double; four wheels would thus be running in whatever direction the chariot moved. Smend thinks the wheels seemed to be inside each other when seen in perspective; i.e. the rim of one wheel would touch not the rim but the inner part (between rim and axle) of the wheel at right angles to it. This conflicts with the definite squareness of the whole conception as well as being a mechanical impossibility. From whichever side you look, the wheel opposite seems to contain the wheel at right angles to it. Verse 17 states the necessary consequence of verse 12. There is a reminiscence of this passage in Dan. vii. 9. See Plan G.

18. Literally, 'and their felloes, and height was theirs, and fear was theirs.' For 'fear' the LXX reads with slight change of letters, 'I saw.'

eyes, to show the wheels where to go; the general direction is given by the Spirit (verses 12 and 20).

20. the spirit. Cf. v. 12. The text is again probably too full.

the spirit of the living creature: LXX as R. V. margin, 'of life,' which is less probably the meaning of the Hebrew. The phrase might be used collectively (cf. note on verse 15), or better, of one of them standing for all. Ezekiel would naturally see only one at a time with any clearness. Kraetzschmar suggests here and in x. 17, 'the spirit of one thing,' as emphasizing the unity of the whole. The singular occurs also in verse 22. We might translate simply, with Jahn, 'a living spirit.'

21. A further instance of the fullness of the text, appearing in a shorter form in the LXX.

went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up beside them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And over the head of the living creature 22
there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And under the firmament were their wings 23
straight, the one toward the other: every one had two which covered on this side, and every one had two which covered on that side, their bodies. And when they went, 24
I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a noise of tumult like the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice above the firmament 25

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i. 22–28. *The Throne and the Divine 'Appearance' thereon.*

22. likeness, as in verse 5, and throughout the chapter.

firmament: a platform, not used here in the technical sense, found in Gen. i. 6, of a circle dividing the upper from the lower waters. This platform is stretched over the heads, not the wings, since the wings sometimes bent down (verse 24).

terrible crystal. Is crystal 'terrible'? Delitzsch holds that, on the analogy of Assyrian, the word means 'ice'; so R.V. margin. In Exod. xxiv. 10 the pavement under God's feet is sapphire (see verse 26). Both ice and sapphire suggest the blue of Heaven. Ice might be called 'terrible' as suggesting the storms and desolation of the north (Job xxxvii. 22), or the text should be altered, with the LXX, to 'become visible,' as in x. 1.

23. This mention of the wings conflicts with verse 6, &c., and implies that each had six. LXX has merely 'in the case of each there were two wings covering their bodies,' which avoids the difficulty of 'on this side' and 'on that side,' or, as we should probably understand the Hebrew, 'to this creature' and 'to that.' Observe the skill with which Ezekiel preserves the reader's suspense as to what rests upon the platform.

24. Almighty. An archaic term for God, used chiefly in poetry; in Gen. xvii. 1, with El (God) prefixed.

For the 'voice of God' cf. Ps. xxix. 3; Job xxxvii. 4.

great waters: cf. xliii. 2, and Rev. i. 15. LXX omits the comparisons to the voice of God and the noise of battle.

that was over their heads: when they stood, they let down
26 their wings. And above the firmament that was over
their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance
of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne
was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above.
27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of
fire within it round about, from the appearance of his
loins and upward; and from the appearance of his loins
and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and
28 there was brightness round about him. As the appear-
ance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so
was the appearance of the brightness round about. This
was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the

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25. The second part of the verse is here out of place,—a mere repetition of the end of verse 24. Observe that the voice is heard before the appearance on the firmament is noted.

26. sapphire: see note on verse 22. The clear blue of the sapphire now emerges plainly from the darkness and fire of the storm-cloud. LXX reads 'above it' after 'throne,' suggesting that, as in Exod. xxiv. 10, the sapphire was the 'paved work.' In his insistence on 'likeness' in the vision of God, Ezekiel comes midway between the earlier narratives in the Pentateuch, where God is seen as clearly as a man, and the later ones where God Himself is not seen at all; and in x. 1 Ezekiel is silent as to the appearance of the Person on the throne.

27. colour of amber: *lit.* 'eye of amber' (cf. verse 16), apparently of the glowing brightness of the substance. On 'amber' see note on verse 4. The appearance is divided into two halves, above and below what would be the loins, had the figure been really human; below, fire; above, a clearer brightness. (Cf. Isa. vi. 1; the 'train,' with no definite contour.)

28. the bow that is in the cloud. The 'amber' would seem to flash in the glowing light with all the colours of the rainbow. To the Hebrew, as to the English reader, the rainbow recalls the covenant made with Noah. The 'bow' is only mentioned in the latest Pentateuchal narrative, but it was not therefore unknown to Ezekiel. Whether or not there is here a distant thought of Noah's covenant, the expression, like the whole verse, suggests calm after storm.

LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, **2**

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one that spake. Is this Yahweh himself? In ii. 1, iii. 1. 4, we have 'he said unto me'; in iii. 16, the usual phrase 'the word of Yahweh came unto me, saying.' There is here, as in earlier parts of the O. T. (e. g. Judges ii. 1, vi. 11 and 14), no clear distinction between the angel (messenger or spokesman) of Yahweh and Yahweh himself, and the glory of Yahweh and Yahweh are practically synonymous. The reticence at the end of the verse is specially noteworthy after the fullness of the preceding details. In xliii. 6 ff. there is the same ambiguity as to the speaker (Yahweh, or the man?).

ii. 1–7. *The attitude in which the prophet is to approach the people.* This passage exhibits a striking likeness to the call of Isaiah and of Jeremiah. Amos had prefaced his message with words which imply that Yahweh's utterance will bring mourning and desolation. Isaiah, in striking language, is told in his vision in the temple to go and make the people unwilling and unable to hear him. Jeremiah, who describes no actual vision of Yahweh, first pleads his ignorance and youth, then learns that his mission is both destructive and constructive, and then, after seeing an almond-tree and a caldron facing the north, is sent as a foe to the city which, he is told, has been rebellious from the beginning. Mention is made of Ezekiel's inexperience, but he is warned against a natural shrinking from the words and also the looks of his hearers; the characteristic expression 'a rebellious house' tolls like a knell through the chapter, and the repeated phrase, 'whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,' suggests that he, like Isaiah, is simply to give his message, but is not responsible for its effect—a thought which does not occur in Isaiah, but is fully worked out later by Ezekiel (chap. xxxiii). The whole passage shows first that, while Ezekiel had pondered over the call of his predecessors, his experience was his own; and secondly that, harsh as his message might seem, he himself was by no means devoid of feeling.

1. he. See note on i. 28. Yahweh himself has not yet been mentioned, but the pronoun can refer to no one else.

Son of man. An expression almost peculiar, in the O. T., to Ezekiel, but used by him nearly 100 times. The Hebrew word here used for 'man' means 'human being'; 'son' expresses regularly, in Hebrew, an individual member of a class; hence, the best translation would be simply 'man.' Its use emphasizes

2 and I will speak with thee. And the spirit entered into
me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet;
3 and I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto
me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to
nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against
me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me,
4 even unto this very day. And the children are impudent

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the distance at which Ezekiel feels himself to stand before Yahweh, and is quite in accord with Ezekiel's 'Calvinistic' view of the unconditioned supremacy of Yahweh. In Amos vii. 8, viii. 2, and Jer. i. 11, Yahweh addresses the prophets by name. The meaning of the phrase in Dan. viii. 17 is the same as here. In Dan. vii. 13, it marks the contrast between the human and the animal character of the different sovereignties described. In Ps. viii. 5 and Job xxv. 6 the contrast is between the insignificance of man and the strength of God; the same is true of Isa. li. 12. Delitzsch suggests that just as in Babylonian phraseology 'son of no one' is used of a slave, 'son of man' may denote here a free man, or person of importance; this hardly needs refutation. The term is used in Enoch in a distinctly Messianic sense. Did Ezekiel's use influence Christ's own use of the term for Himself? Probably Christ's hearers would understand the term as Ezekiel had used it, while to Christ Himself it would signify the truth expressed in Matt. xix. 30 and Luke xxii. 27; cf. Adeney's *St. Luke* (CENTURY BIBLE), p. 182.

stand. Cf. Dan. x. 11. Here rather as a slave before his master.

2. Again, the spirit is the activity of Yahweh in the world,—in Ezekiel, as in the chariot. Ezekiel is himself overpowered by the vision. The word translated by 'spake' is peculiar in form, and denotes the special dignity of the speaker.

3. nations. This expression generally denotes the heathen, as opposed to Israel. Are the two kingdoms of Israel meant? Ezekiel nowhere refers to the Northern Kingdom (which had been destroyed for 130 years) except to prophesy its ultimate restoration to Judah. LXX omits the word; if it is retained, it should be altered to the singular.

rebellious. A very common phrase with Ezekiel. To him the constant tendency to rebel against Babylon, culminating in Zedekiah's desperate revolt, is typical of the whole attitude of Israel to Yahweh. See the full development of this conception in chaps. xvi, xx, xxiii. The sinfulness of the present is really at one with the sinfulness of the past, the 'fathers.'

4. impudent: *lit.* 'hard of face': cf. the common expression

and stiffhearted; I do send thee unto them: and thou
shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And 5
they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,
(for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there
hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of 6
man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their
words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou
dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words,
nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious
house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, 7
whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for
they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear 8

'stiff-necked,' 'stiff-hearted'; so Yahweh is said to harden Pharaoh's heart (Exod. vii. 3, &c.).

Thus saith, &c.: the usual introductory formula of a prophet's address; the spirit of Ezekiel's addresses is sufficiently defined by the preceding words.

the Lord GOD: *lit.* the Lord Yahweh (in our versions LORD is always the translation of 'Yahweh'). Ezekiel uses this fuller phrase a little oftener than the simple 'Yahweh.' In the last nine chapters Ezekiel also uses the expression, Yahweh Elohim, which occurs elsewhere in the O.T. only in Gen. ii and iii.

5. whether they will hear, &c. This is the first suggestion of the problem of individual freedom and responsibility which is worked out at length in chaps. iii, xviii, xxxiii.

hath been. Ezekiel may not influence the people by his preaching, but his presence will be remembered after he has gone from their midst. The phrase recalls Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

6. briers and thorns. Cf. xxviii. 24, and the similar encouragement in Jer. i. 8, 17.

ii. 8—iii. 3. *The Inspiration of the Prophet.* In Jer. i. 9, after Jeremiah has received his instructions, Yahweh touches the prophet's mouth, saying, 'I have put my words in thy mouth.' Isaiah's lips had been touched by the glowing stone from the altar (Isa. vi. 7). Ezekiel's experience, like his vision, is fuller: he is given a roll, which he is made first to eat and then to read. What is the actual experience which this account represents? The following chapters are full of occurrences and actions which it seems difficult or (as here) impossible to interpret literally: on the other hand, if they are merely picturesque descriptions of purely mental

what I say unto thee; be not thou rebellious like that
rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give
9 thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was put
10 forth unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; and
he spread it before me; and it was written within and
without: and there was written therein lamentations, and
3 mourning, and woe. And he said unto me, Son of man,
eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go, speak unto
2 the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he

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and normal states, the detail is strangely over-elaborate. The matter is discussed more fully on iv. 1; here it is enough to suggest that Ezekiel is still in a trance-like state; the same may, doubtless, have been the case with Jeremiah.

8. be not . . . rebellious. Ezekiel is to be different from his countrymen, and not to shrink from a difficult task, as they had done.

open thy mouth. Ezekiel first sees the proffered roll closed; but he is made to see its contents before it is actually devoured. In Rev. x. 9 the seer notices a 'little book' open in the angel's hand, and is told to eat it, finding it sweet in his mouth, like Ezekiel, and bitter in his belly.

9. Ezekiel instinctively avoids saying 'Yahweh's hand'; see note on i. 28. Smend sees an appropriateness in the fact that a roll is given to one who was a writer and law-giver rather than a prophet. But Ezekiel would not have forgotten the destruction of Jeremiah's roll, and there is nothing to imply that he thought of his own vision as different; his 'dumbness' is only partial, and there is no mention of his writing. On the other hand, he has learnt reverence for a book in the inspired code of Deuteronomy; and the existence of the roll also marks a less intimate relation between Yahweh and his prophet than that of which Isaiah and Jeremiah were conscious. The 'flying' roll forms the material of one of the visions of Zechariah (v. 1).

10. within and without. The tables of stone were engraved on both sides (Exod. xxxii. 15). The contents of the roll are a further sign that the passage is not the result of the reflection of a later period in the prophet's life. He has to speak of much besides mourning and lamentation; only half his work is purely destructive; but Ezekiel is as yet quite unconscious of the second half of his prophetic activity, and the first impression of his message is one of unmitigated disaster; the roll is not only written inside, but 'so long-drawn are the laments' on the cover as well.

caused me to eat the roll. And he said unto me, Son of 3
man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this
roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in
my mouth as honey for sweetness.

And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto 4
the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.
For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and 5
of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; not to 6
many peoples of a strange speech and of an hard language,
whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, if I
sent thee to them, they would hearken unto thee. But 7
the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they
will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are
of an hard forehead and of a stiff heart. Behold, I have 8
made thy face hard against their faces, and thy forehead
hard against their foreheads. As an adamant harder 9

iii. 3. Why was the roll sweet? Not because of its contents (ii. 10). The Hebrew properly means 'like a sweet thing, as honey.' The manna tasted like wafers made with honey (Exod. xvi. 31). The sweetness of the roll results from its being God's gift. The suggestion that the phrase denotes Ezekiel's eager and willing devotion seems less probable.

iii. 4–11. That the prophet may be neither disappointed nor discouraged afterwards, he is told in the plainest language of the imperiousness of his countrymen, and the strength which was to be given to him. There is equal implicitness in the charges given to Isaiah and Jeremiah. The passage characteristically repeats the thought of ii. 3, 7, with the addition of the single thought that refusal to hear will not have the excuse of a foreign language.

5. strange speech: *lit.* as R. V. marg. 'deep of lip': cf. Exod. iv. 10, and Isa. xxxiii. 19 (of the Assyrians). The speech of foreigners sounds like mumbling or stammering; in trying to be understood one instinctively raises the voice.

6. they would hearken: the most galling thought to a Jew: cf. xvi. 48, 51, and Christ's words on Sodom, Nineveh, and Tyre (Matt. xi. 21 and xii. 41). The same thought may have been present to the author of the book of Jonah in his description of the speedy repentance of Nineveh, contrasted with the disobedience of the prophet and of the nation which the prophet there represents.

than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not,
neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a re-
10 bellious house. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man,
all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine
11 heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to
them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people,
and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord
GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will
forbear.
12 Then the spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me
the voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed be the glory
13 of the LORD from his place. And *I heard* the noise of
the wings of the living creatures as they touched one
another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, even
14 the noise of a great rushing. So the spirit lifted me up,
and took me away: and I went in bitterness, in the heat
of my spirit, and the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

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11. people: a word almost confined to Yahweh's chosen nation. For Ezekiel there is a further bitterness in 'thy people.'

iii. 12-15. *The conclusion of the trance.*

12. lifted me up: as the wind might lift a leaf.

Blessed be the glory, &c. The text is difficult, from the omission in the Hebrew of a word for 'saying,' and the fact that elsewhere Yahweh is blessed, and not his glory, as well as from the difficult expression 'from his place.' The LXX gives no help; but a slight change would yield 'when the glory of Yahweh rose from his place,' which later scribes might easily think dangerously anthropomorphic.

13. The wings are now spread out, and the wheels begin to move, with a sound like thunder. Observe the brevity of the description of Yahweh's departure.

14. took me away. After this we should have expected 'and brought me to Tel-abib'; but, as it would seem, on coming out of the trance-state, Ezekiel finds himself on the way to Tel-abib. Though the chariot has gone, Ezekiel can still feel Yahweh's hand on him in the oppression of his mind.

in bitterness: in verse 15 the LXX inserts 'uplifted,' in a state of exaltation, omitting 'in bitterness' here. But the reading

Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that 15
dwelt by the river Chebar, and to where they dwelt; and
I sat there astonied among them seven days.

And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that 16

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of the Hebrew text is surely better, as denoting the natural reaction combined with the prophet's consciousness of the overwhelming difficulty of his task. Ezekiel's sensitive and emotional nature is specially likely to feel both bitterness and also 'heat' or excitement of spirit.

15. The Hebrew here is awkward; probably the redundancy is an error, and we should read 'and I came to the exiles to Tel-abib, by the river Chebar, where they lived.' We cannot tell whether Ezekiel's home was here, unless Smend is right in holding that Tel-abib was the single colony of the exiles. The word in Assyrian means 'hill of flood,' or 'of storm.' Possibly it might be, as Kraetzschmar suggests, the name of a region of sand-hills, which the Hebrew exiles were turning into a hill (as the word would sound to Hebrew ears) of corn. The spot cannot now be identified.

iii. 16-21. *The responsibility of the hearer.* Ezekiel here takes up the thought which was suggested in ii. 5, &c., and which is elaborated in chaps. xiv, xviii, xxxiii; the same conception is discussed in each passage—here, from the point of view of the watchman; in chap. xiv of foreign cults; and in chaps. xviii and xxxiii of the death of the sinner. The fullest exposition is found in chap. xxxiii; for which iii. 16-21 reads like a preliminary study (iii. 16 = xxxiii. 1-6; iii. 17-19 = xxxiii. 7-9); verses 20, 21 (cf. xviii. 24, xxxiii. 12-18) have nothing quite corresponding to them in their insistence on the need for the righteous man to be warned lest he fall into sin. The possibility, both of 'conversion' and of 'falling from grace,' is here clearly stated. Had Ezekiel any concrete examples in his mind? In Chronicles, Manasseh's repentance and forgiveness are described (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-13), and Josiah's death is attributed to an earlier sin (2 Chron. xxxv. 22). The narrative in Kings is silent on both these subjects, but the tradition of the former and the view which caused the mention of the latter may easily have been familiar to Ezekiel. We can hardly say that as yet the problem of individual responsibility has risen before Ezekiel in all its difficulty; he is thinking much more of his own responsibilities than the moral freedom of man in general from the effects of the sins of his own past life and of his ancestors. See notes on xiv. 18–33.

16. In the Hebrew text a lacuna is marked in the middle of the verse after 'seven days'; there is, however, no obvious omission.

17 the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, I
have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel:
therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them
18 warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou
shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor
speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to
save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his
19 iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet
if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his
wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his
20 iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when
a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and
commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him,
he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he

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17. watchman. This is a new name for the prophet; but the main function of previous prophets had been to warn sinners of the inevitable results of their sin, and to proclaim the reward brought by a return to Yahweh (cf. Isa. i. 17); and to forecast the future in this way meant also to interpret the present.

18. It is significant that the first message suggested to Ezekiel is the solemn 'thou shalt surely die.' But in spite of this categorical future, the sentence is obviously meant to be understood as conditional—'if thou dost not repent' (cf. xxxiii. 13). This possibility of repentance is always left open, although since Yahweh is considered as the cause of every event, refusal to repent, as in Exod. ix. 12 (contrast Exod. vii. 13, viii. 19-32) and Isa. vi. 10, may be attributed to the action of Yahweh or his prophet. The earlier expression, 'it repented Yahweh of the evil,' Ezekiel's discussion definitely transcends.

blood: as elsewhere, the blood stands for the life. The wicked must die; but the careless watchman is really his murderer.

19. To complete the parallel with the temptation of the righteous Ezekiel should have added to this verse the case of the successful warning of the wicked (cf. v. 21).

delivered thy soul, or life, from the guilt of murder.

20. I lay a stumblingblock. In these words a problem is suggested which Ezekiel never fully realizes. In chap. xviii the principle is stated, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' But does God

shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous 21
man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and thou hast delivered thy soul.

And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and 22

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tempt to evil? In that case, if there is no watchman at the time, does not the real responsibility for the sinner's ruin rest with God? The answer of the N. T. is explicit (Jas. i. 13); but the Jew, recognizing that temptations do come, and (as it seems) from outside the man himself, had no alternative (until he came to think of 'the Satan') to attributing them to God. Cf. Jer. vi. 21; also 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, contrasted with 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

iii. 22–27. *The closing of the Prophet's lips.* Some omission has often been suspected at the end of verse 21. Either after the seven days were over (verse 15), or after this further message, we might have expected that some pastoral work would be done. But no addition is necessary. For this postponement of practical work, parallels may be found in Paul's fourteen years in Arabia (which delayed at all events the main activity of his life) and the forty days of retirement after the baptism of Jesus. That Ezekiel should be held back, when on the point of speaking, by further messages as well as by dumbness (verse 26) is perfectly natural. Ezekiel sees once more Yahweh's glory; whether the vision of the chariot came to him in all its details is not stated, though verse 23 implies it. He is then told to shut himself in his house; his fellow exiles will 'lay hands' on him, and he is to be dumb, so as to be unable to reprove or act as a watchman; this silence is to end with some fresh message from Yahweh, and Ezekiel's speech will then begin with an echo of the already familiar words, 'whether they will hear, or,' &c.

This short passage may be taken as either the close of the first section of this part of the book, or the opening of the second. The actual public work of the prophet begins with the next chapter; but Yahweh's words continue without break from chap. iii to chap. iv. That an interval of time is possible, however, is clear from the way in which v. 1 follows iv. 17. Is there an interval also between verses 21 and 22? No date is specified between i. 1 and viii. 1; but it is still quite possible that the events and messages from iii. 16 to vii. 27 belong to different occasions in the interval.

he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will
23 there talk with thee. Then I arose, and went forth into
the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there,
as the glory which I saw by the river Chebar: and I fell
24 on my face. Then the spirit entered into me, and set me
upon my feet; and he spake with me, and said unto me,
25 Go, shut thyself within thine house. But thou, son of
man, behold, they shall lay bands upon thee, and shall
bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among
26 them: and I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of
thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to

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22. plain: R.V. marg. 'valley': the more low-lying country as opposed to Tel-abib. Verse 23 shows it to be a different spot to that where Ezekiel saw the vision of chap. i.

23. the glory of the LORD. This is seen again in viii. 2, 4 (see notes); no reference is made there, or here, to the chariot, which is part of the vision in chaps. ix and x, and also, since the glory moves, in chap. xliii. On the other hand, what had been seen once would be likely to be seen, or recalled, on the re-appearance of any part of it.

24. The result of this confinement is clear from the accounts of the visits of the 'elders' in chaps. viii, xiv.

25. lay bands. How was this done? Do the words refer to some unrecorded outburst of fury after Ezekiel's first preaching? Chap. iv. 8 suggests the slight change necessary to give the reading 'I have bound' for 'they will bind' (the so-called perfect of confidence); in this way also verse 26 follows verse 25 more naturally.

26. What was the reason for this dumbness? Evidently Israel had gone too far in sin for reproof to be of any use. They were not prevented from hearing the words sent to them; no word was to be sent. But does this not contradict verses 16-21? Smend suggests that Ezekiel had attempted to carry out the duty laid on him in those verses, and had failed. Kraetzschmar holds that verse 17 is a later addition. This can neither be disproved nor proved; but the prophet, as subsequent chapters show, was certainly still a watchman, though, as it would seem, intermittently.

What, then, was the nature of the 'dumbness'? Is it the result of some nervous disease (see on iv. 4)? No attacks of such dumbness are mentioned, and the 'opening of the prophet's mouth' in

them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But 27
when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou
shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: He that
heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him
forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it 4

xxxiii. 22 (cf. xxiv. 27) implies a resumption of activities in public. In the intervening chapters the prophet speaks unhindered, but not, like his predecessors, in public. Jeremiah was practically dumb, in the sense of being debarred from effective public speech, through much of his ministry. R. G. Moulton has suggested that, unlike other prophets, Ezekiel had to wait for the actual moment of inspiration; but there is nothing to show that he differed from others in this respect. Jahn holds the dumbness to consist in the lack of result in Ezekiel's preaching, which he compares with that of Isaiah and of Jesus; but no one could speak of them as dumb. The 'dumbness' was probably neither wholly physical nor wholly mental. The shock implied in verse 25 would mean an access of nervousness at the thought of again facing the exiles publicly, which would literally, in the case of one so sensitive as Ezekiel, 'tie his tongue.' Similar instances of the combination of the mental and physical are often observed in connexion with stammering.

SECTION II. FIRST CYCLE OF THREATS (iv. 1–vii. 27).

These chapters form one long cry of doom, unrelenting and even fierce; the words of the prophet simply echo the anger of one from whom all pity has been driven; only in chap. vii (in the reiterated 'end,' and 'is come') do we catch sight of the misery of the prophet himself as he shudders at the ruin he pronounces. Observe that the nation's sins are here taken for granted; not till in the succeeding section does he contemplate all that justifies this terrible fate. For the grim sternness of detail in the description of disaster, the chapters are almost parallel to Deut. xxviii. 15–68. In chaps. iv and v a progress is to be noticed—siege, famine, destruction; the descriptions gain in clearness as the prophet proceeds. Chap. vi marks the first entrance of a thought very familiar, that the land itself is the subject of holiness or sin; chap. vii gathers up all that has gone before in a succession of surprising lyrical outbursts.

Chaps. iv and v introduce us to the frequent symbolical actions in Ezekiel. Were they literally carried out? Smend (see on iii. 10) and König (*Dict. Bib.* vol. v. pp. 175 f.) argue strongly for

before thee, and pourtray upon it a city, even Jerusalem:
2 and lay siege against it, and build forts against it, and cast

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the negative. The latter, who doubts also the literalness of Hosea i and iii, points out that the actions are rarely stated to be carried out; that some (iv. 5, 12; cf. Jer. xxv. 15 ff.) are, taken literally, incredible; others (e. g. xii. 18) would be hardly noticeable; that the caldron incident in xxiv. 3 is definitely called a parable, and hence, also, the actions in xxi. 17, xxii. 13, and iii. 24 are to be understood as parables. Kuenen and Toy agree. Bertholet and Kraetzschmar hold that all was literally carried out, as also does H. P. Smith (*History of Israel*, pp. 302 ff.); even the '190' days of iv. 5 might be explained by a prolonged illness (see note on verse 4). Davidson holds that 'there is more than mere literary artifice,' though some of the symbols could not have been represented, and 'probably none were actually performed.' We must, however, remember the following points. (1) Orientals love symbolic and dramatic action—how easily that love showed itself may be seen in xxi. 19 and 20; what is almost inconceivable to us might be as possible in ancient Babylonia as it is in modern India. (2) The line drawn between symbol and reality is uncertain; an act might be called a *māshāl* (proverb) while it was being naturally carried out (cf. the 'parable of the fig-tree,' Matt. xxiv. 32). (3) In all the prophets there seems to be something psychically abnormal, and especially so in Ezekiel. (4) The emblems or symbols vary greatly; Isaiah walks barefoot; Jeremiah finds a text in the Rechabite vow, Ezekiel in the catch phrases used by his hearers. Even Smend allows that the actions in chap. xii were performed. When Ezekiel has described what he was told to do, it need not surprise us that he does not add 'and I did it.' (5) The prophetic word is itself considered as a force in the world: cf. verse 7 and xxxvii. 9. On the other hand, why, if the emblems are merely literary, do they preface some messages and not others? Strange as some of them are, we must suppose that they were carried out more or less completely. The possibility of the several emblems will be discussed as we come to them; and though to us some of them, as Jahn strongly urges, might seem almost ludicrous, to the exiles, knowing the possibility of the dangers thus foretold, having suffered much themselves, and seeing the intense earnestness of the prophet, they must have been in the last degree impressive.

iv. 1–3. *The emblems of the siege.*

1. tile. A clay brick, like those of which whole libraries were composed in Babylon. Many building plans have been found on these clay tablets, as well as astrological and other diagrams; one

up a mount against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it round about. And take thou 3
unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face toward it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

Moreover lie thou upon thy left side, and lay the 4

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such is carved as lying on the knees of one of the well-known Telloh statues of Gudea (2500 B. C. or earlier) as statues of mediaeval kings and bishops carry models of cathedrals and abbeys.

2. forts: probably trenches or ramparts.

mount, or mound: the like can be seen in Assyrian representations of sieges, in the British Museum and elsewhere. Cf. Lam. iv. 18. It would not be difficult on the brick to mark the position of mounds, battering-rams, &c.

3. The 'pan' or 'flat plate' (R. V. marg.), here representing the besieged fortifications, is a sort of griddle, on which cakes for offerings are cooked (Lev. ii. 5, vi. 14). As Ezekiel represents God in what he says and does (the two are really the same), Bertholet understands Ezekiel's meaning to be that Yahweh is really besieging Jerusalem. To Isaiah also the Assyrian is the rod of Yahweh's anger. But the principle cannot be applied to the next section.

iv. 4–17. *The emblem of the siege and exile.* The prophet is told to lie, first on his right side, and then on his left, a certain number of days, to signify the exile of Israel and Judah from their own land. This passage has suggested to several students that Ezekiel suffered from catalepsy—a theory which seems to explain other apparent instances of abnormality in the prophet. The view was first brought forward by Klostermann (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1877); its most recent advocate is Kraetzschmar. Catalepsy is described as a light hypnosis, in which the sense organs are closed to all impressions from the outside world, while the patient hears what is said to him by the operator and performs any action which may be commanded, exhibiting at times extraordinary strength and endurance—laid out, for example, at full length upon a row of chairs, he will remain in the same position when all these are removed except the two which support his head and his heels. Of hypnosis in general, 'the sole condition is a total surrender of the will, as the popular phrase goes, to the person or thing attended to' (Titchener). Whether catalepsy, as a state of unconsciousness and extreme rigidity, can exist apart from suggestion, as Klostermann

iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: *according to* the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt
5 bear their iniquity. For I have appointed the years of their iniquity to be unto thee a number of days, even three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the

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assumed, is now felt to be highly doubtful; it is alleged, however, to follow hallucinations of sight or sound, some violent excitement, or serious physical injuries; it may last either minutes or months, and rarely, if ever, proves fatal.[1] The only characteristics in common between Ezekiel's experiences and those of a cataleptic are trances and the single instance of a prolonged physical rigidity. But trances are by no means confined to cataleptics; and the rigidity, if we interpret it literally, need not have been anything so definite as actual catalepsy. Nothing is gained by the supposition; we should be left wondering why the other trances were not followed by rigidity also; and we should have to credit Ezekiel with much greater freedom in interpreting his own disease than has ever been attributed to Hosea's account of his relations with his wife. The dumbness, we saw, was probably physical only in part; Ezekiel's abnormality consisted rather in a strongly developed faculty of abstraction and second sight which, as far as we can tell, left his other powers of body and mind untouched. Such abnormality is no more a sign of anything approaching mental deficiency than was Socrates's 'demon.'

4. lay . . . upon it: in the second half of the verse it is Ezekiel himself who bears the iniquity of Israel; and it would naturally be expected that Yahweh and not Ezekiel should 'lay the iniquity' where it is to rest, as he 'lays bands' on Ezekiel in verse 8. Hence Wellhausen and others read, 'I have laid the iniquity upon thee.' Sin is here, as constantly in the O. T., regarded as a load which is carried till it is atoned for. In Num. xiv. 34 Israel is to bear the iniquity of its murmurings for forty years in the desert. Bearing iniquity is thus often equivalent to undergoing punishment; but the phrase sets the emphasis on the sin and not the punishment. In these verses Ezekiel's bearing the iniquity is symbolical and not vicarious.

5. Although 150 years had passed since the fall of Samaria, the Northern Kingdom is still part of the true Israel; nor does Ezekiel seem to think of it as schismatic; and it will, as such, be restored (cf. xxxvii. 15 ff. and xlviii. 1 ff.). The left side naturally stands for the north, the right for the south. To what does the '390'

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[1] See also Myers, *Human Personality*, vol. i. pp. 163, 335.

iniquity of the house of Israel. And again, when thou 6
hast accomplished these, thou shalt lie on thy right side,
and shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah: forty
days, each day for a year, have I appointed it unto thee.
And thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, 7
with thine arm uncovered; and thou shalt prophesy
against it. And, behold, I lay bands upon thee, and thou 8
shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou

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refer? The days evidently stand for years; the length of Judah's exile (verse 6) is to be forty years; hence Israel's could only last 190 years in all. This is one of the readings of the LXX, the other being 150 (190−40). How, then, can the 390 of the MT. be explained? We may suppose that 190 was altered to 390 to include the 200 years of the separate existence of the Northern Kingdom, or to bring the length of time up to the years of the Egyptian bondage, viz. 430 (390 + 40) (Exod. xii. 40; Num. xiv. 34).

6. forty. See Introd. p. 14. The actual interval from Jehoiakim's captivity to the restoration under Cyrus was sixty years. Forty is constantly used as a round number expressive of a generation; Israel's sojourn in the desert lasted forty years; also, according to the latest narratives, the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. The number is specially frequent in the book of Judges; and see xxix. 11, 13.

7. siege of Jerusalem: cf. verse 3. The literal and the symbolical are hardly dissociated here; what holds of the one holds of the other. The prophet does not rigidly distinguish siege and exile, though Cornill and Jahn regard verses 4–17 as containing two originally separate symbolisms, and rearrange the verses accordingly.

8. thou shalt not turn thee. Would not this be a physical impossibility, even for the shorter space of six months, save in a case of catalepsy (see on verse 4)? The exception itself (*via sup.*) is difficult. Probably, as the 'dumbness' allowed of a great deal of speaking, the lying first on one side and then on the other would be continued for certain, perhaps daily, intervals, through the specified period, the 'bands' here (cf. iii. 25) being spiritual and not pathological. On this interpretation, the 'sign' would be far more impressive to the community than if Ezekiel, on recovering from a trance, and learning that it had lasted 230 days, forthwith interpreted it as referring to the duration of the exile.

thy siege, the action by which the prophet symbolizes, and so, in a sense, undergoes the siege.

9 hast accomplished the days of thy siege. Take thou also
unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and
millet, and spelt, and put them in one vessel, and make
thee bread thereof; *according to* the number of the days
that thou shalt lie upon thy side, even three hundred and
10 ninety days, shalt thou eat thereof. And thy meat which
thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day:
11 from time to time shalt thou eat it. And thou shalt drink
water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to

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9. Such a mixture was presumably unlawful, like wearing clothing made of two materials, ploughing with an ox and an ass together, or sowing a field with two kinds of corn (Deut. xxii. 9; Lev. xix. 17). The prohibition seems to be directed merely against unnatural combinations. In any case, the straits to which a besieged city is put are here indicated.

10. The order of the verses is difficult; 10 and 11 come awkwardly after 9, and 16 after 15; on the other hand, 10 and 11 might easily have been inserted before 12, so as to get the commands as to food together. Cornill would place together verses 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12 ff. (omitting 7 as a gloss); the first of these two sections would thus refer to the siege, the second to the exile. How, then, would the alteration have come about? It is easier to suppose that Ezekiel himself, with both siege and exile in mind, is responsible for the apparent clumsiness. Kraetzschmar more boldly attributes the present awkwardness to a combination of two recensions, one dealing with the exile, the other with the siege.

meat, as always in our translation, means 'food.'

shekels. The Hebrew weights were identical, or almost identical, with the Babylonian. The exiles would probably be using the Babylonian standard. The heavy shekel weighed 252 grains, the light 126 (about the weight of an English sovereign: see note on xlv. 12). Hence Ezekiel's food for the whole day amounted to about eight ounces; the food of a low-paid labouring man in England is found to average about two pounds a day. (See Rowntree's *Poverty*, p. 394.) Cf. Lev. xxvi. 26. That Jerusalem was reduced to such extremes is not stated in Kings, but implied by several passages in Lamentations.

11. hin: a hin roughly equals twelve pints. The fact that Ezekiel eats and drinks during his 'siege' seems conclusive against the theory of catalepsy.

time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley 12
cakes, and thou shalt bake it in their sight with dung that
cometh out of man. And the LORD said, Even thus 13
shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean,
among the nations whither I will drive them. Then said 14
I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted:
for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of
that which dieth of itself, or is torn of beasts; neither
came there abominable flesh into my mouth. Then he 15
said unto me, See, I have given thee cow's dung for man's
dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread thereon. More- 16

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12. cakes were generally baked in hot ashes or on hot stones.

in their sight. We are not told when the interpretation was to be given; but, at all events, the curiosity of the exiles was to be aroused from the beginning. The revolting condition here commanded is explained as referring, not to the siege, but to the exile (see verse 13). The transition from the one calamity to the other is abrupt; but such abruptness is not impossible to the excited state in which the prophet must have received these revelations. He is not writing in a serene atmosphere like that of chaps. xl–xlviii.

13. Food eaten abroad was unclean, like the foreign land itself, because unsanctified by the neighbourhood of the Deity. The same idea is strong in modern Hinduism; but it was never widely felt by the Jews, outside priestly circles, to attach to all foreign travel or residence, nor does the thought appear in Isaiah xl–lxvi.

14. Kleinert remarks that Ezekiel was so much of a priest that even in a dream he cannot eat impure food; we can hardly conclude, however, with Kleinert, that the priestly contrast between pure and impure 'controls his universe of thought.' See, however, xliv. 23. For the prohibition of torn flesh, &c., see Exod. xxii. 30; Deut. xiv. 21; apparently the fear underlay it that blood might be eaten with the meat. Even at present all meat eaten by Jews must be killed in a special manner to avoid this. It is worthy of note that in chap. xliv Ezekiel applies restrictions to priests that Deuteronomy applies to all Israel. He is speaking here not as a priest but as a good Israelite. Cf. Acts x. 14. Conversations between Yahweh and the prophet are as rare in Ezekiel as they are frequent in Jeremiah.

15. Whether this is a diminution of the uncleanness, or its removal, cannot be decided. It is still a practice of the Fellahîn in Palestine.

over he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with carefulness; and they shall drink water
17 by measure, and with astonishment: that they may want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and pine away in their iniquity.

5 And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp sword, *as* a barber's razor shalt thou take it unto thee, and shalt cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.
2 A third part shalt thou burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part, and smite with the sword round about it; and a third part thou shalt scatter to the
3 wind, and I will draw out a sword after them. And thou

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16. astonishment. The word rendered 'astonish' is now expressed better by the form 'astound.' Cf. xii. 19, and Jer. ii. 12, where 'be astonished' is parallel to 'be ye horribly afraid.'

17. pine away. Cf. xxiv. 23, xxxiii. 10, and Lev. xxvi. 39; in each case the cause is sin itself, rather than any results of sin.

v. 1–4. *The emblem of the extirpation of the nation.* This follows naturally on the previous chapter. Ezekiel has been besieger and besieged; now he becomes, so to speak, the city itself, and its destroyer.

1. Cf. Isa. vii. 20. The metaphor of that passage has changed into the acted symbol of this. To those who watched the act, the cutting off of hair and beard would be familiar as a sign of mourning. Cf. xxiv. 17. The balances will further suggest the inerrancy of the divine judgement: cf. Isa. xxviii. 17. LXX has 'sharper than a barber's razor,' which would need the omission of the second 'thou shalt take unto thee.'

2. fire. The word here generally denotes 'hearth fire,' the warming rather than the destructive element; hence the more bitter irony of this passage, 'when the days of the siege,' &c., i. e. to symbolize the conflagration when, &c. The prophet speaks as if symbol and reality were now completely one.

draw out, i. e. lengthen out. This threefold action shows the extent of the coming calamity very clearly; the city itself a prey to pestilence, famine, and fire; its immediate surroundings a prey

shalt take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. And of these again shalt thou take, and cast them 4
into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; therefrom shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem: I have 5
set her in the midst of the nations, and countries are round about her. And she hath rebelled against my 6

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to the sword and wild beasts; and the land of exile, where fire and sword will still follow the fugitives.

3. bind them in thy skirts: to bind in the folds of the garment is to save from ruin. For the expression, cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 29; for the idea of the remnant to be saved, cf. Isa. vi. 13, x. 22, Jer. xxiii. 3, and Ezek. vi. 8. Elsewhere, not even a remnant is to survive: cf. Isa. xiv. 30; Jer. xi. 23; and Ezek. xi. 13.

4. For the remnant a further calamity is waiting: cf. verse 10.

therefrom. This cannot, according to the Hebrew, or the sense, refer to the fire. Then to what? The only alternative is the remnant; but it is not easy to see how a fire could come forth on *all* Israel, either from that part of the remnant that is destroyed, or the part that is saved. The sense would be far easier if we were to follow Kraetzschmar's suggestion, and read 'from me' (cf. the end of verse 2).

v. 5-17. *Explanation of the four symbols.* Because the nation has opposed Yahweh, Yahweh opposes the nation, and will make her a terrible example to the world; the punishments just symbolized shall be more than fulfilled. Thus will Yahweh make himself recognized; and the whole section ends in a reiterated sentence of hopeless condemnation. The passage falls into two divisions, verses 5-10, 11-17.

5. in the midst of the nations. To the historian, Palestine is literally 'in the midst,' at the meeting-point of East and West. Following Ezekiel, Dante places Jerusalem at the centre of the world, with the Ganges as the extreme East and the pillars of Hercules as the extreme West. To the Greeks Delphi was the 'navel of the earth'. See Judges ix. 37; Ps. xlviii. 2; and Hom. *Odyssey*, i. 50. But the whole context makes it clear that Ezekiel's thought is—Jerusalem is visible to all the nations; hence they will see both her sin and her punishment. The conversion of the nations does not enter the prophet's thought; but if they are not here expected to serve Jehovah, both Israel's calamities and their own are to force them to reverence him.

judgements in doing wickedness more than the nations,
and against my statutes more than the countries that are
round about her: for they have rejected my judgements,
and as for my statutes, they have not walked in them.
7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Because ye are
turbulent more than the nations that are round about you,
and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my
judgements, neither have done after the ordinances of the
8 nations that are round about you; therefore thus saith
the Lord GOD: Behold, I, even I, am against thee; and
I will execute judgements in the midst of thee in the
9 sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I
have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the
10 like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the
fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the
sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgements
in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter unto
11 all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD,

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6. for they have rejected. As the text stands 'they' ought here to refer to 'Jerusalem,' otherwise we should expect 'and yet they,' implying that the sin of Jerusalem is still greater. The thought is that of Amos iii. 2.

7. more than the nations. Cf. especially xvi. 46 ff.

ordinances of the nations. Israel has fallen below pagan morality. One of the few references in the O. T. to 'the law written in the heart': cf. Rom. ii. 15. We cannot gather from the rest of the book what was Ezekiel's conception of these ordinances; but he certainly saw in Babylon a city and society of 'modern' morality (see Introd. p. 16), and he nowhere inveighs against the ordinances of Babylon as of the other nations. Had he felt the difference between the orderliness of Babylon and the turbulence of Jerusalem? In xi. 12 the negative is omitted (in spite of xvi. 48), and Ewald, Smend, and Toy would omit it here ('Thou hast imitated the heathen').

9. That Jerusalem should be destroyed was still almost unthinkable to the Jews.

10. See Jer. xix. 9; Deut. xxviii. 53; and 2 Kings vi. 28.

the whole remnant. This goes beyond verse 3.

surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish *thee*; neither shall mine eye spare, and I also will have no pity. A third part of thee shall die 12
with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and a third part I will scatter unto all the winds, and will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will 13
satisfy my fury upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken in my zeal,

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11. It is noteworthy that Judah's sin culminates for Ezekiel in the defilement of the sanctuary.

abominations. An almost technical term for the idols which were the rivals, or (to the unthinking) the representations of Yahweh.

diminish: of the two meanings of the Hebrew word which is used here, the one, to 'scratch' or 'scrape,' seems impossible; and it is difficult to find an object for the other, 'to withhold,' in the word 'eye,' which does not occur till the next sentence. A stronger expression is needed; and a slight change gives 'hew down,' as in R. V. margin.

will have no pity. Cf. viii. 18, xxi. 21, xxxvi. 22.

12. Explains verse 2. Cf. vi. 11. A fourth plague, of wild beasts, is often added: cf. verse 17, xvii. 14, xxxiii. 27; Jer. xxi. 7. Note the sudden change from the second person to the third, in the clause which is verbally repeated from verse 2.

13. satisfy my fury: i. e. as R.V. marg., 'bring it to rest'; Yahweh's anger will be exhausted when the full punishment has been inflicted. This is the side of Ezekiel's theology which is least evangelical.

comforted: as the heat of anger subsides.

that I the LORD have spoken: a variant of the words constantly on Ezekiel's lips, 'they shall know that I am Yahweh.' To a phrase so common we must not assign too precise a meaning. 'They shall recognize that I am not like the gods of the nations, held even by their worshippers to be capricious and feeble; but that I am as you, my own people, should know me, righteous and supreme.' To a true Israelite the name Yahweh (Israel's God) now connotes all that a Gentile could understand by 'Elohim,' or God.

14 when I have accomplished my fury upon them. More-
over I will make thee a desolation and a reproach, among
the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all
15 that pass by. So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an
instruction and an astonishment, unto the nations that are
round about thee, when I shall execute judgements in thee
in anger and in fury, and in furious rebukes: I the LORD
16 have spoken it: when I shall send upon them the evil
arrows of famine, that are for destruction, which I will
send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon
17 you, and will break your staff of bread; and I will send
upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave
thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through
thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee: I the LORD
have spoken it.

6 2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son

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15. The text of the LXX is here considerably shorter.

16. The insistence on famine is noteworthy; it was the most terrible of the evils of siege, as afflicting every one indiscriminately.

17. evil beasts: cf. Exod. xxiii. 29; 2 Kings xvii. 25; Deut. vii. 22. The removal of this plague is foretold in Ezek. xxxiv. 25. The lion is prominent in the O. T., as in Assyrian sculptures.

blood. The phrase 'pestilence and blood' (alliterative in Hebrew) occurs in xxviii. 23, xxxviii. 22; blood would therefore seem to be used for corpses or the contagion of dead bodies.

The change from the plural to the singular, as in Deuteronomy, is easy, when the nation is thought of as a moral personality responsible to Yahweh.

vi. 1–11. *The address to the mountains of Israel.* In the memory of an exile the mountains of Israel, which formed the backbone of Palestine, would stand out in pathetic contrast to the monotonous plain of Mesopotamia; but to the religious reformer the mountains would suggest the local shrines which crowned their heights. Ezekiel was compelled to denounce the very things he could not but love. We may compare the thought expressed in Wordsworth's sonnet on the subjugation of Switzerland, beginning 'Two voices are there; one is of the sea; One of the mountains.' The desolation of the mountain shrines, and the mountain towns.

of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy unto them, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear 3
the word of the Lord GOD: Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains and to the hills, to the watercourses and to the valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars 4
shall become desolate, and your sun-images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your

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is to be complete. A remnant, however, is to escape, in order to come to a late repentance for their sins. D. H. Müller has pointed out that the general scheme of thought in Ezekiel's mind reappears in chaps. xxxv and xxxvi, where the oracle commences with Yahweh's command to the prophet; next comes the call to the mountains; then a prediction of war and death and destruction of cities; lastly, the recognition of the power of God by the sufferers and (though not here) the nations. This sequence is not confined to a few chapters, but appears in Ezekiel's general thought.

3. watercourses, or, as R. V. marg., 'ravines': the *wadies* which dried up in summer. 'Valleys' is a wider term. The valleys too were scenes of idolatry, especially the valley of Hinnom (which has, in the language of the N. T., become 'Gehenna'): see also Joshua xv. 8 and 1 Sam. xvii. 2, 19.

high places. Heb. *Bamah*, a word of uncertain derivation, precariously connected with the Greek word for altar: cf. xvi. 16, xx. 29, xxxvi. 2, xliii. 7. They existed at places known to have been sacred in pre-Israelite times, which were therefore presumably seats of the old heathen rites; these would naturally influence and degrade the worship of Yahweh, which indeed they must have originally attracted to their own sacred sites. The high places are in 1 Sam. ix. 12 spoken of as innocent; and in 1 and 2 Kings they are mentioned as not being removed except by Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel imply that they still exist. 'High places' have recently been discovered at Taanach, Gezer, and Petra. Their general features were an altar, standing stones and 'asherah' or sacred pole, laver, sacred cave, and depository for refuse.

4. sun-images. Sun-worship had become popular in Judah under Manasseh; but the word used here may probably refer to a North Syrian god whose name appears in Mount Amanus, and who would be easily identified with Baal (see note on viii. 16, and 2 Kings xxiii. 4).

5 idols. And I will lay the carcases of the children of Israel
before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round
6 about your altars. In all your dwelling places the cities
shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate;
that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and
your idols may be broken and cease, and your sun-images
may be hewn down, and your works may be abolished
7 And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall
8 know that I am the LORD. Yet will I leave a remnant,
in that ye shall have some that escape the sword among
the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the
9 countries. And they that escape of you shall remember
me among the nations whither they shall be carried
captives, how that I have been broken with their whorish
heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes,

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idols: the word here used is almost peculiar to Ezekiel, 'block-idols,' but constantly employed by him; notice the irony of their helplessness.

5. The first half of the verse, repeated almost verbally from the previous clause, is absent in the LXX.

your bones. Cf. Jer. vii. 32. To scatter the bones was to defile the shrines as well as to destroy their worshippers.

6. cities: the word does not imply more than what to us would be a village, and would generally be close to the high places. Flinders Petrie tells of an Arab who pointed out to him three tents lying in a valley beneath them with the words, 'Behold the city of the sons of my tribe.'

works. Your manufactured idols.

9. I have been broken. The Hebrew which these words represent can hardly be translated literally; some error underlies the received text. Most authorities agree with R. V. marg. in reading 'I will break.' The latter phrase is in accordance with the minatory tone of this chapter, and with Ezekiel's general thought; the former (the suffering of God over His people's disobedience) is not found elsewhere in this book.

whorish heart. See Introd., pp. 30, 37, for the connexion between idolatry and sexual impurity: cf. also Matt. xii. 39; Mark viii. 38, where the sin referred to is more general. To Ezekiel, however, idolatry is 'the sum of all villainies.'

which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall 10 know that I am the LORD: I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: Smite with thine hand, and 11 stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas! because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel: for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. He 12 that is far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them. And ye shall know that I am the 13 LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the

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loathe themselves. The analysis of repentance is fuller in Ezekiel than elsewhere in the O.T. See notes on xxxvi. 31. The desolation of exile recalls the sufferers' thought to Yahweh, whom they had forgotten in their own land; and this thought produces, not prayers for restoration, but self-contempt and a fresh insight into his character.

vi. 11-14. *Recapitulation of preceding menaces.* These recapitulatory passages are characteristic of Ezekiel; the reader finds them otiose, and is surprised to meet with them in so eager and passionate a writer. But it must be remembered that these passages were not necessarily delivered at one time; and the repetition has an epic impressiveness of its own, like the reiterated warnings of a Cassandra.

11. Thus saith the Lord GOD: the words mark the beginning of a new address.

Smite . . . and stamp, in xxv. 6, are expressions of exultation over a fallen enemy; what is called in German 'Schadenfreude.' 'Alas' should therefore be altered to 'Aha!' Regarding the conditions around him as a struggle between Yahweh and his revolted subjects, the prophet sides with Yahweh, and rejoices at his ally's well-deserved triumph. The attitude of Hosea and Jeremiah is very different, and even Ezekiel does not preserve this exultation unchanged: see xi. 13. The continued tone of excitement must not be forgotten by the reader.

tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet
14 savour to all their idols. And I will stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate and waste, from the wilderness toward Diblah, throughout all their habitations: and they shall know that I am the LORD.
7 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

13. under every green tree. Trees, generally solitary and conspicuous, are still revered as sacred by the Fellahîn in Palestine. For the widespread popularity of tree-worship, see Frazer, *Golden Bough*, *passim*. God's oracular voice was supposed to be heard in the rustling of the leaves: cf. 2 Sam. v. 24.

sweet savour: a phrase which occurs first in Ezekiel, but is characteristic of the later legislation.

The expressions in the centre of the verse recall phrases common in Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions; e. g. 'I threw the bodies of their warriors on the tops of the hills; I made their blood to flow over the valleys and the heights of the mountains.'

14. Diblah: such a wilderness is unknown. Diblathaim in Moab, east of the Dead Sea (Num. xxxiii. 46; Jer. xlviii. 22), can hardly be meant. Michaelis suggests 'from the desert to Riblah,' i. e. from furthest south to north; Riblah on the Orontes ('in the land of Hamath,' Jer. lii. 9) would have a mournful significance for Ezekiel's later readers, as the scene of the blinding of Zedekiah.

vii. *Conclusion of the first cycle of threats.* 'The end is at hand!' The whole chapter is a good example of a style of composition almost peculiar to Ezekiel. The 'dirge' is half lyrical, half homiletic; and the lyrical tone is half of triumph, half of lament. The prophet's mind is full of the sin of his country, and the inevitableness of its ruin; his spirit rises at the vindication of Yahweh's law which Judah had spurned; yet the prolonged dwelling upon the thought of calamity is the characteristic of misery as well as of triumph. Rapid transitions from one mood to the other are to be found in Hosea and Jeremiah; in Ezekiel alone are the two thus blended together.

The chapter falls into three sections, verses 2-9, 10-18, 19-27. Ezekiel begins with a bare announcement of the relentless fulfilment of the threatened punishment; he then pictures the blow falling with paralysing suddenness on all the activities of city life, and the tragic contrast of the ensuing terror and dispersion. This contrast suggests to the prophet the wickedness and idolatry which had governed the old life; the profane land must be further profaned by the presence of the heathen. The lyric ends with

And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto 2
the land of Israel, An end: the end is come upon the
four corners of the land. Now is the end upon thee, 3
and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee
according to thy ways; and I will bring upon thee all
thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, 4
neither will I have pity: but I will bring thy ways upon
thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of
thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: An evil, an only evil; 5
behold, it cometh. An end is come, the end is come, it 6
awaketh against thee; behold, it cometh. Thy doom is 7

---

a prediction of mourning, universal, and deserved. The whole tone of the chapter, with its repeated 'the end,' 'the day,' suggests that the final catastrophe is close at hand; according to the dates (i. 3, viii. 1) it must be at least four years before the fall of the city; but the tone of excitement, as if the prophet all but saw the city in flames, is apparent even immediately after his call; and certainly the chances seemed against Zedekiah being able to hold out as long as he succeeded in doing.

In verses 2–4, 5–9 we again seem to have two recensions of the text (cf. also on x. 9 ff., xxx. 23 ff.); the second section gives nothing fresh except 7^{b}; nearly all the phrases of the first section are merely repeated, and the LXX gives a different (though surely incorrect) order of verses (1, 2, 6^{a}, 7–9, 3, 4, 5^{a}, 10 ff.). On the other hand, unless we are to carry out the drastic suggestions of Jahn (see Introd. pp. 44, 48) right through the book, we must admit that it was characteristic of Ezekiel to incur the charge of repetition by dwelling long on a single thought; here the repetition is a refrain which develops into an antistrophe.

vii. 2–9. *The imminent fulfilment of doom.*

3. send mine anger, as if it were a definite force or agency like the prophet or the prophetic word (cf. Isa. lv. 11).

4. 'Peccatum poena peccati'; the punishment consists in binding the sin to the sinner. Cf. iv. 17.

5. an only evil must mean 'one which needs no second to complete its work.' A possible alteration would give 'evil upon evil.' Note the agitation with which the short clauses are jerked out.

6. the end . . . awaketh: the word in play in the Hebrew (*hak-qēç, hē-qiç*) cannot well be rendered in English.

7. doom: the word occurs in verse 10, and also in Isa. xxviii. 5,

come unto thee, O inhabitant of the land: the time is
come, the day is near; *a day of* tumult, and not *of* joyful
8 shouting, upon the mountains. Now will I shortly pour
out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger against
thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways; and I
9 will bring upon thee all thine abominations. And mine
eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will bring
upon thee according to thy ways, and thine abominations
shall be in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I
10 the LORD do smite. Behold, the day, behold, it cometh:
thy doom is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride
11 hath budded. Violence is risen up into a rod of wicked-
ness; none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude,
nor of their wealth: neither shall there be eminency

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where it means 'crown' or 'garland'; Jewish commentators connect with an Aramaic word for the glow of the sunrise; the sense would then be 'the fatal dawn has come' (so A. V.); or, with Kraetzschmar, we may derive it from a root meaning to 'purify,' LXX omits the word altogether.

tumult, and not . . . joyful shouting: cf. Amos v. 18. The mountains will no longer resound with the joyous cries of harvest, or the shouts of the familiar idolatrous worship.

9. The last clause is an elaboration of the last clause of verse 4.

vii. 10-18. *The tragic contrast between confidence and desolation.*

10. the rod hath blossomed, &c. These words can hardly refer to Babylon, as in Jer. l. 31, since Ezekiel nowhere attacks Babylon; they mean 'the fatal day has come; the boastful confidence of Judah, whether under the protection of Babylon or in rebellion against it (see Introd. p. 13), has at last borne its fruit.' There is probably here a reminiscence of Isa. xxviii. 1 (the intoxicated pride of Samaria). The idea of inevitable Nemesis underlies the prophetic understanding of the judgements of both the eighth century and the sixth; see especially chaps. xxviii. 1-19.

11. Violence. The lawlessness of the richer classes in Jerusalem is attacked from Isaiah onwards. Cf. Ezek. xlv. 9; cf. also Skelton's rhymes:

> Sceptre and crown
> Must tumble down, &c.

eminency: or, as A. V. or R. V. marg., 'wailing.' The

among them. The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they be yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, none shall return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life. They have blown the trumpet, and have made all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys,

12 13 14 15 16

---

word does not occur elsewhere; nor does the word translated 'wealth.' We must either guess at the meaning or correct the text. Cornill suggests simply 'what are they and their multitude?' and, with the LXX, omits the last clause entirely. 'Multitude is repeated like a 'pedal base,' in the three following verses.

13. The older interpretation of this verse (Jerome and Ewald) refers the return to that which is sold to the year of Jubilee, when land reverts to its original owner (Lev. xxv. 10). But if the end of all things is at hand, there would be neither year of Jubilee nor reversion of land. Smend refers to the forced sales, and the cheap purchases from those who were being carried away at the first deportation; the buyers would get little from their bargains. Even so, why should the vendors be bidden not to mourn? They were not to return to their estates (verse 13 ^{b}). Kraetzschmar sets down the whole clause as a gloss, due to a commentator who has not understood the meaning, viz. that in the coming ruin there will be no more opportunity for the triumphs or the regrets of bargaining.

in the iniquity of his life: this sense cannot be got out of the Hebrew. R. V. marg. is nearer; the Hebrew expression is difficult, and it possibly results from a textual corruption. LXX omits it. The general sense is clear.

14. The overweening confidence is succeeded by cowardice and despair.

15. See v. 2, vi. 12.

16. doves of the valleys. LXX omits the comparison. For

17 all of them mourning, every one in his iniquity. All
hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as
18 water. They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth,
and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon
19 all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. They shall
cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as
an unclean thing; their silver and their gold shall not be
able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD;
they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels:
because it hath been the stumblingblock of their iniquity.
20 As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty:
but they made the images of their abominations *and* their
detestable things therein: therefore have I made it unto
21 them as an unclean thing. And I will give it into the
hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of
22 the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it. My face
will I turn also from them, and they shall profane my

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the 'mourning' of doves, cf. Isa. xxxviii. 14, lix. 11; similar expressions are found in Babylonian.

18. baldness: to shave the head entirely is forbidden to Israel, as a heathenish practice, in Deut. xiv. 1, and to the priests in Lev. xxi. 5; Ezek. xliv. 20.

vii. 19-27. *The defiling presence of the heathen in the once fair and prosperous land.*

19. Ezekiel resumes his tone of irony. More than other prophets he has the New Testament suspicion of money; and he omits all reference to gold in describing the ornamentation of his temple. 'The wealth they craved for will be useless to them in their need.'

20. Read as R. V. marg., 'they turned it to pride,' for 'he set it,' &c. 'His' should be 'their.'

21. The heathen themselves will laugh at Judah's golden idols; the wicked will despoil the signs of Judah's wickedness. Cf. Hos. x. 6.

profane. Ezekiel does not suggest, of course, that the idols were holy; but that the gold of which they were made is to be put to a common instead of a religious use; so in verse 22. To profane Yahweh's name (Lev. xviii. 21; Ezek. xxxvi. 20) is to

secret *place*: and robbers shall enter into it, and profane
it. Make the chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, 23
and the city is full of violence. Wherefore I will bring 24
the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their
houses: I will also make the pride of the strong to cease;
and their holy places shall be profaned. Destruction 25
cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be
none. Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour 26
shall be upon rumour; and they shall seek a vision of
the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest,
and counsel from the ancients. The king shall mourn, 27
and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the
hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will

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cause Yahweh to be spoken of as if he were one of the gods of the heathen.

22. secret: whether we apply this to Yahweh's *place*, or *treasure*, the temple is meant. Israel profanes it by allowing the heathen to enter and spoil: cf. Luke xxi. 24. Hence, Israel must share the responsibility for the outrages of her foes.

23. chain. This word is not used elsewhere by Ezekiel; and there is nothing in the context to suggest this command to prepare for the chaining of the prisoners. Most commentators, including Davidson, doubt the genuineness of the text. Some stronger expression seems to be needed after verse 22, such as 'clear it out!'

24. LXX reads 'of their strength' instead of 'of the strong.'

26. Cf. for the first part of the verse, Jer. iv. 20; for the second, Jer. xviii. 18; the verse is a good example of the influence exerted over Ezekiel by the older prophet.

the law means instruction to meet the special crisis; the priest is as dumb as the prophet and the statesman. From the days of Eli, and still earlier, the priest was expected to take a leading part in national affairs; he is much more than a mere performer of sacrifices; his decisions are sought not only in religious perplexities (Ezek. xliv. 23; Hag. ii. 11) but also in law-suits (Ezek. xliv. 24). Cf. also 2 Kings xix. 2, xxii. 14.

27. The king. Ezekiel never uses this word for Zedekiah nor for other kings of Judah, except in xxxvii. 22, 24 and xliii. 7, 9; he prefers 'prince'; and this latter word is always used for the civil head of the new state in xl–xlviii. Even if 'king' is right here, 'prince' can hardly follow it, as if some

do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

8 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth *month*,

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other high functionary (unknown elsewhere) were meant. LXX omits the reference to the king altogether. Were 'king' right, we should at least have expected 'princes' to signify the nobility as distinct from the commonalty.

deserts, literally 'judgements,' i. e. practices and habits—parallel to 'way.'

SECTION III. JERUSALEM'S SIN AND FALL (viii–xi).

A year has elapsed since the last date (i. 1), though not necessarily since the delivery of chap. vii. Better relations, however, seem to exist between Ezekiel and his neighbours than are implied in chap. iii; still, the community as a whole, and even the elders themselves, are far from understanding Ezekiel's message or God's will. In this section symbolic action and allegory crystallize into vision. Ezekiel has already foretold the impending ruin of the city, and, in general terms, denounced its sins. Now these things are described—seen in detail—and Yahweh at last dramatically deserts the city, and leaves it to its fate. The order of the visions is natural and impressive—the interest increasing steadily up to the final moment of Yahweh's departure. The incident in chap. xi, however, which culminates in the death of Pelatiah, would more naturally have preceded the second theophany, and even the vision of the destroying angels; we should then have had, first the wickedness in the city, then the descent of the punishment. The answer is that the general effect of arrangement in Ezekiel's prophecies and visions does not necessarily prevent their being set down in the order in which they occurred (see Introd. pp. 8, 9), and that there is a special appropriateness in the passage, as occurring in this particular context (see note to chap. xi). The whole section concludes with the first word of promise uttered by the prophet (xi. 16–20), which strikingly though briefly anticipates chap. xxxvii. It is, however, only a gleam out of a dark sky; it is followed immediately by a further and comprehensive threat, and the vision of Yahweh's departure.

Visions, says Marti, with regard to Zechariah, 'neither imply dreams, nor are they mere fictions of the imagination, but the representations sketched out by the prophet in full consciousness of the truth that had dawned on him.' This hardly holds good of Ezekiel, since, in the case of the 'emblems,' we could hardly explain the vivid detail. Have we, then, descriptions founded on

in the fifth *day* of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of

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special knowledge which Ezekiel possessed of what was being done in Jerusalem? In that case, why did he 'dress them up' as visions, unless he wished to deceive his hearers? Even then, his gain would be slight, since his point is that the practices were actually carried on. Still less can he be describing, under the form of a vision, general usages which would be familiar to him and all his hearers. The visions must really be visions; i. e. by some power of second sight, Ezekiel, whether in a trance or not, must have watched these scenes. Whether they were taking place at the very moment is immaterial; but there is nothing that makes any detail of them improbable. Many instances of such second sight, occurring both with and without connexion with the trance-state, and carefully authenticated, may be found in *Phantasms of the Living*, Myers' *Human Personality*, &c.

viii. 1–18. *The first series of visions* (the appearance of Yahweh; the iniquities in the temple; the Image of Jealousy; animal-worship; the weeping for Tammuz; the worship of the sun; the sentence of condemnation) supplies valuable material for our knowledge of the religious reaction after the death of Josiah. Thucydides remarked in connexion with the plague at Athens, that national misfortunes turn men to religion or else to atheism. The effect of misfortune on the southern kingdom was not atheism, but an outburst of violent superstition and fanaticism, as was shown in the treatment of Jeremiah; see also Introd. p. 13. That these idolatrous practices have all a strong Babylonian character is not surprising, since Judah is now a Babylonian vassal-state. The account of 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14 ff. rests largely on this chapter, which forms also a valuable commentary on the reversal of the Deuteronomic reforms.

viii. 1–6. *The appearance of Yahweh and the image of jealousy.*

1. The sixth month: as in i. 1, the word 'month' is omitted in the Hebrew. The date will be Sept. 1, 591; but the LXX reads 'the fifth month,' which would make the interval since the first chapter exactly a year and a month (supplying 'fourth' from i. 1 to i. 3: see note *ad loc.*). This is equivalent to the seven days of iii. 16 added to the 390 days (Hebrew text) of iv. 9. This reckoning, however, assumes that the forty days of iv. 5 are included in the 390, and the LXX of iv. 9 reads not 390 but 190 (or 150). The methods of writing numbers were so various and liable to confusion that the paucity of such uncertainties as this is surprising.

the elders. Cf. xiv. 1, xx. 1. Whatever the real nature of Ezekiel's 'dumbness' (see on iii. 26), he is treated with re-

2 the Lord GOD fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and,
lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the ap-
pearance of his loins and downward, fire: and from his
loins and upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the
3 colour of amber. And he put forth the form of an hand,
and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted
me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought
me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the
gate of the inner *court* that looketh toward the north;
where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which
4 provoketh to jealousy. And, behold, the glory of the
God of Israel was there, according to the appearance that

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spect by the leaders of his community, to whom he seems to be something more than is implied in xxxiii. 32. Smend, who attributes these three chapters to a literary 'working up,' thinks that the visit of the elders may really have thrown Ezekiel into a trance.

the hand of the Lord: cf. i. 3, iii. 14.

2. For the first 'fire' LXX reads 'man'; i. 26, 27 makes this certain; see notes thereon. For 'amber' see note on i. 4.

3. Note that Yahweh's hand is put out, but that the 'spirit' lifts the prophet into mid-air: cf. i. 20, iii. 12. The expressions illustrate the mingled clearness and vagueness of Ezekiel's psychical experiences. Ezekiel is quite brief in describing what would be familiar to a priest.

lock: a rare word, but found also in Num. xv. 38, and connected with the Assyrian word meaning 'twisted.'

image of jealousy, i. e. image which provokes jealousy. Was this an 'asherah,' or sacred pole, such as was set up beside the altar in Canaanite Baal-worship (cf. 2 Kings xxi. 7)? If so, Ezekiel is set down in the temple close to the *old* position of this image, which is presumably one of those hewn down by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 6, though note the 'pillar' in verse 3); this was no longer here, but, as Ezekiel notices in verse 5, in another place.

The word for image, *semel*, occurs only here and in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 7, 15 (perhaps recalled there from this place), and in Deut. iv. 16, which perhaps Ezekiel has in mind. Gunkel holds the word to be the name of an animal to which worship of Babylonian origin was offered. This may be so, but evidence is wanting, and

I saw in the plain. Then said he unto me, Son of man, 5
lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I
lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold
northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy
in the entry. And he said unto me, Son of man, seest 6
thou what they do? even the great abominations that the
house of Israel do commit here, that I should go far off
from my sanctuary? but thou shalt again see yet other
great abominations. And he brought me to the door of 7
the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.
Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: 8

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the distinctively Babylonian innovations are mentioned later in the chapter.

4. Yahweh's glory has occupied the place where once the image had stood. We must notice that the divine glory is now no longer resting on the chariot (cf. ix. 3), which we find later on waiting for him at the south or right side of the temple (x. 3). In iii. 23 also Yahweh appears apart from the chariot.

5. the gate of the altar. Ezekiel is here writing for those who know the plan of Solomon's temple by heart. Is this gate the same as that in verse 3? We know Ezekiel's own temple far better. The altar-gate would naturally be the gate (leading, presumably, from the east) by which the inner court, where the altar stood, would be approached.

6. what they do. Ezekiel evidently saw worshippers as well as the image. No wonder that in his own temple he banishes the laity from the inner courts.

that I should go. R. V. marg. 'to get them far off.' In view of the end of chap. xi, the former is undoubtedly right; the Hebrew could be rendered either way.

yet other . . . abominations: the refrain which follows each section of the vision.

viii. 7–13. *The animal worship (the cult of the mysteries).*

7. Apparently Ezekiel is brought again to the outer court; when he refers to the inner court he specifies his meaning.

8. The hole shows him where to force an opening for his body; the men had naturally come in by the door.

dig. The word is used of a ship labouring through a storm, or of a thief breaking into a house: cf. Job xxiv. 16; Exod. xxii. 1. This 'digging through' implies that the cult was secret; not that the worshippers feared punishment on discovery, but because the

9 and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And
he said unto me, Go in, and see the wicked abominations
10 that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold
every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts,
and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon
11 the wall round about. And there stood before them
seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in
the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan,
with every man his censer in his hand; and the odour of
12 the cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me,

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mystery-worship is only for the initiated (cf. Jevons, *Introd. to Study of Religion*, chap. xvi).

10. upon the wall. This, with the reference to all kinds of animals, has led many to refer these mysteries to Egypt (so Smend and Bertholet). Incense and the dark chamber were characteristic of Egyptian ritual. On the other hand, there is no clear trace of Egyptian influence on the religion of Israel. The worship of the divinity under certain animal forms (notably the bull and the snake) was familiar in Israel (cf. 1 Kings xiii. 28; 2 Kings xviii. 4); but this multitude of idols may well have been Babylonian; reliefs on the walls were frequent in Babylon (cf. also Ezek. xxiii. 14), and incense was also a part of Babylonian worship. At this period, however, Judah was peculiarly susceptible to the political influence of both Babylon and Egypt, and the cults of both countries may have joined with that of the Canaanites in suggesting new modes of worship. The bitter irony of 'all the idols of the house of Israel' must not be missed.

11. seventy: a round number like 'twenty-five,' verse 16. Cf. Moses' seventy elders (Num. xi. 16).

elders: probably prominent men rather than heads of families.

Jaazaniah: in xi. 1 a different Jaazaniah is mentioned. The better attested LXX reading is, here and in chap. xi, Jeconiah, which is also the alternative form of Jehoiachin, Zedekiah's predecessor on the throne. Shaphan was the chancellor of Josiah (2 Kings xxii; Jer. xxxix. 14) to whom Hilkiah announced the discovery of the book of the law. Is Ezekiel thinking here of the problem he discusses so fully elsewhere, of the moral differences between fathers and sons? Gemariah, who tried in vain to prevent the burning of Jeremiah's roll, is another son of Shaphan (Jer. xxxvi. 25).

incense: in earlier Hebrew the word means 'firebrand' or 'billet'; in Jeremiah (vi. 20, &c.) a costly spice from Southern

Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth. He said also unto me, Thou 13 shalt again see yet other great abominations which they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S 14 house which was toward the north; and behold, there sat the women weeping for Tammuz. Then said he unto 15

Arabia; only in the later Levitical law is it regularly used as Ezekiel uses it in this place. The use of it here is an innovation, as the whole cult appears to be.

12. his chambers of imagery. This implies that each had a separate cell; such cells Ezekiel provides (for quite other purposes) in his temple vision (xli. 5 ff.). Hitherto we have been led to think of one room where all were gathered. Could Ezekiel have seen into all seventy cells? Smend answers by his hypothesis that the 'vision' is simply a literary description; but the details, as elsewhere, make against this supposition. The mysteries may easily have involved some actions performed in common and others separately; nor does the expression suggest that Ezekiel was conscious of examining every cell. Kraetzschmar doubts the integrity of the text, and suggests 'how each offers incense to his idol.'

The LORD seeth us not, &c. Cf. Pss. x. 11, lxiv. 5, &c. The phrase is repeated in ix. 9. The meaning of the worshippers is that Yahweh would not approve of these rites, but that Yahweh has plainly ceased to care for the distracted state and people; they must look elsewhere for help. For quotations of other popular sayings, cf. xi. 3, 15, xii. 21, xviii. 2, 19, &c.

viii. 14–15. *The Adonis-cult.*

14. the door of the gate, i. e. the outer gate of the temple.

Tammuz is the Babylonian Dûzu, from Dumu-zu; the name is not Semitic, and is therefore attributed to the supposed older or Sumerian element in Babylonian life. He is the god of spring vegetation, who dies (goes down to Hades), and revives again with the returning summer (July was the month of the festival). Ishtar, the goddess of fertility, goes down to Hades to seek for him. His worship is familiar to us as that of Adonis, celebrated in later times with special pomp in Syria. The story of Venus and Adonis is simply the Oriental nature-myth in a Western dress; in Egypt it appears under the form of the Osiris cult (see J. G. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 278, and *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*).

me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? thou shalt again
16 see yet greater abominations than these. And he brought
me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and behold,
at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch
and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their
backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces
toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the
17 east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son
of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that
they commit the abominations which they commit here?
for they have filled the land with violence, and have

Adonis means simply 'lord'; Dumu-zu is said to mean 'son of life.' Note the brevity of the description of this part of the vision, Milton's well-known allusion in *Paradise Lost* neglects the tragic side of the cult. Babylonian hymns to Tammuz have been preserved. Later, in Syria, Adonis, like all Syrian gods, became identified with the sun.

viii. 16-18. *The Sun-worship; the climax of the abominations.*

16. Ezekiel is brought back again into the inner court, from the outer gate; the exact spot is not here mentioned; but, like that at which the men stood, it will be one of the more sacred spots in the temple; hence the heinousness of their defiant offence. Since Ezekiel has gone in at the north gate, he naturally sees the sun-worship in the east last of all.

five and twenty men. Are these the heads of the twenty-four priestly families with the chief priest? The 'about,' and the fact that Ezekiel does not say they were priests, forbids this assumption; probably they were laymen, like the 'seventy elders.' LXX here reads 'twenty,' which happens to be the Babylonian number signifying the sun.

the sun. Sun-worship in Judah is first mentioned in 2 Kings xxiii. 5, 11; presumably it had entered the country in Manasseh's time. There can be no reference here to the later Persian sun-worship.

toward the east. The natural position for a sun-worshipper; the 'orientation' of our churches is possibly due to similar considerations or traditions. The holy place in Ezekiel's temple, as in Solomon's, faces west.

17. violence. For Ezekiel, moral and ritual sins are not distinguishable; denunciation of the latter is also that of its inevitable accompaniment. Cf. xviii. 5-9, xxii. 7-12.

turned again to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put
the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in 18
fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity:
and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet
will I not hear them.

Then he cried in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, 9

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they put the branch to their nose. The phrase cannot be decisively explained. There can be no reference to Persian ritual. The LXX has 'merely beheld them as it were mocking.' This suggests that the Jewish commentators are right in understanding the words to conceal some shocking or obscene rite; other plain-spoken and to us revolting expressions have been removed from the Hebrew text by the scribes. If this is so, we can see why this ritual is regarded as worst of all. The real sting of idolatry lay in its connexion with 'violence' and open immodesty. In the Cyprian worship of Adonis, flowers were held to the nose; but no clear reference to that rite can be detected here. J. H. Moulton holds that the reference is to a rite of pre-Persian Magianism, which survives among the modern Parsees.

18. cry in mine ears: the phrase is repeated in the verse immediately following, though in a different sense. LXX omits the second half of the verse. This is not necessary; though, if chap. ix follows immediately on chap. viii, as seems to be the case, the repetition is decidedly awkward.

ix. *The vision of the Destroying Angels.* The vision of relentless and speedy punishment naturally follows that of open and defiant sin. The punishment, however, is discriminating; the angels are first to set a mark on those whose sorrowing resentment dissociates them from the city's guilt; then the rest are to be slain without pity, and the temple itself polluted by corpses, as the sinners had polluted it with idolatry. Ezekiel for a moment shudders at the thought that the last hope of the nation is being extinguished in this punishment of its capital; he is told that land and city have sinned equally; and the vision concludes with the report of the angelic scribe, who announces with the coolness of a Babylonian army-clerk that the destruction is now complete.

Discrimination in punishment has been already hinted at in iii. 19; but hitherto, and throughout the whole of the first section, the city has been regarded as altogether reprobate. Now Ezekiel seems to make a similar discovery to that of Elijah (1 Kings xix. 18). The relief afforded thereby only starts fresh problems, to

Cause ye them that have charge over the city to draw
near, every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.
2 And behold, six men came from the way of the upper
gate, which lieth toward the north, every man with his
slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man in the midst
of them clothed in linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his
side. And they went in, and stood beside the brasen

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solve which (in chaps. xiv, xviii, xxxiii) Ezekiel takes up the thought of iii. 19 afresh.

1. See note on viii. 18.

them that have charge over the city. The word in Hebrew is primarily abstract, and is so translated in the LXX and the Vulgate—'visitation, punishment.' The justification for the concrete here would be the reference, immediately following, to the six men. They, however, do not appear as 'in charge of the city,' but rather as summoned to destroy it. The word for 'cause to draw near' appears, both in the Hebrew and the LXX, as 'have drawn near'; hence we should read 'the punishments of the city have come!' (cf. xii. 23; Hos. ix. 7; Mic. vii. 4), the second half of the verse anticipating verse 2.

2. six men. Hitherto angels have appeared singly (except in Gen. xviii). But these are not angels such as appeared to Gideon or Elijah; they are ministers of the coming judgement. The translation of verse 1 in A. V. and R. V. suggests that they were the guardian angels of the city; but this use is still later, and is nowhere suggested in Ezekiel. Still less can we see here a parallel to Tobit xii. 15, or Rev. iv. 5, viii. 2, though these may have been influenced by our author here. We can hardly help feeling that Ezekiel has not forgotten the high officials of Nebuchadnezzar who would superintend the deportation of 596 B.C.

upper gate, apparently the same as that mentioned in viii. 3, near where stood the 'image of jealousy.' Presumably, these 'men' had been brought with him by Yahweh, and left in the outer court till they were needed.

slaughter weapon: the R. V. margin reads 'battle-axe.' So LXX. Probably, as in Jer. li. 20, 'hammer.'

linen. The material of the priests' clothing (xliv. 17: cf. 1 Sam. ii. 18, xxii. 18, where the priests in early Israel wear a linen ephod). The functions of scribe and priest were always closely allied.

brasen altar. The altar set up in the temple by Solomon, the work of Hiram (2 Chron. iv. 1; 1 Kings viii. 64). Ahaz

altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up 3
from the cherub, whereupon it was, to the threshold of
the house: and he called to the man clothed in linen,
which had the writer's inkhorn by his side. And the 4
LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city,
through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the
foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the
abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to 5
the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye through the city
after him, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have
ye pity: slay utterly the old man, the young man and the 6
maiden, and little children and women: but come not
near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my

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had set up another altar of Assyrian type, but this was of stone; the brazen altar was set by Ahaz on the north side of his own (2 Kings xvi. 14). See note on xliii. 13.

3. gone up from the cherub, &c. A similar phrase occurs in x. 4. The two verses, however, do not clash; here, the reference is to the cherubs in the holy place of the temple. It was this 'Shekinah' of which Ezekiel had been made aware in viii. 4. For the cherubs in Solomon's temple see note on i. 11.

4. a mark. The Hebrew is 'Tav'; the name of the letter T, which in the older script was shaped like a cross (in Palestine—the Moabite stone, and the Siloam inscription—simply ×, which is actually in use as a modern Arab tribal mark). A different word is used for the 'sign' placed upon Cain. Such a sign or mark may have been originally suggested by the badges of tribe or cult (cf. W. R. Smith, *Kinship*, p. 215); it has been conjectured that the early Hebrew prophets bore such marks. A similar sign or mark is the blood sprinkled on the door-posts (Exod. xii. 23). Cf. Rev. vii. 3, xiv. 1, xiii. 16. It is only a coincidence that the Egyptian cross is the sign for life.

6. The command to begin at the sanctuary is as terrible as the general command to destroy; but the sanctuary had long since been polluted by sin; if destruction is to begin with the worst sinners (viii. 11, 16), it can begin nowhere else; contrast Luke xxiv. 47.

come not near, &c. Ezekiel will have no slaying of the guiltless. Contrast Gen. xviii. 23, where a whole city would be saved, were there ten guiltless men within its walls.

sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which
7 were before the house. And he said unto them, Defile
the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth.
8 And they went forth, and smote in the city. And it
came to pass, while they were smiting, and I was left, that
I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD!
wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring
9 out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me,
The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding
great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of
wresting *of judgement:* for they say, The LORD hath for-
10 saken the earth, and the LORD seeth not. And as for me
also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity,
11 but I will bring their way upon their head. And behold,
the man clothed in linen, which had the inkhorn by his
side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou
hast commanded me.

10 Then I looked, and behold, in the firmament that was

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7. The command to begin at the sanctuary is made still more striking by the second command, to defile it. Note the terrible and dramatic curtness of the order.

8. and I was left. The form of this word in the Hebrew is curious, and it is omitted in the LXX; but it is highly significant; 'as I was left alone with the dead in Yahweh's presence.' The same root, by a play on words, is used in the word translated 'residue.' This 'residue' is the population left in the country after 597 B.C., already sadly worn down: cf. xi. 13. Ezekiel rarely gives direct expression to any feeling over the calamities of his country save righteous exultation; but here and in xxiv. 15 ff., where he is actually beholding the ruin, a cry of horror escapes him. The cry is quickly stifled, as Yahweh reminds him of Judah's guilt.

9. for they say, &c. See viii. 12.

10. Cf. v. 11, vii. 9, viii. 18, ix. 5. A similar refrain occurs in the early chapters of Isaiah; 'for all this his anger is not turned away,' &c. (Isa. v. 25, &c.). Cf. also Amos i. 3, 6, &c.

x. *The second Theophany.* If anything further were here to be added to ch. ix, we should have expected an account of the

over the head of the cherubim, there appeared above them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of

destruction of the city. Ezekiel avoids the necessity of giving this by describing symbolically the spiritual side of the destruction for which the previous chapter has prepared us; at the same time our attention is carried from the sickening details of slaughter to the majesty of Yahweh. The effect of the whole is extraordinarily powerful; the wrathful presence of Yahweh; the temple, empty save for the heaps of the dead and the trembling Ezekiel; the heavenly scribe, approaching the chariot as it stands in the background, and taking from its midst burning coals to fling over the doomed city; and as the city blazes, the awe-inspiring sound of the wings of the cherubim.

At this moment Ezekiel seems to be overcome by the vision; and he sees before him all the details of the chariot as he had seen them in his first trance, describing them, as if he had not described them before, with minute but frequent variations. All the same, he is conscious that he is seeing what he has seen before; three times he asserts this; he then sees Yahweh's glory depart from the temple and rest upon the chariot; and the vision ends.

It ought not to surprise us that the chapter contains frequent breaks of thought, and that in many verses it does not hang well together. What would be otherwise difficult to explain without plentiful recourse to hypothetical—and bungling—scribes and redactors, becomes natural if we regard Ezekiel as describing the rapid transitions of a trance; rapid as are these transitions, they only answer to the rapidity of thought when freed from communion with its normal environment.

x. 1–9. *The vision of the burning of the city.*

1. firmament: i.e. the platform of the divine chariot. Hitherto Yahweh has been in the temple (ix. 3, 4); nor is anything said here of Yahweh's glory resting as yet on the chariot; sapphire and throne have been described in i. 26. We must suppose that Ezekiel now sees the chariot outside the walls of the temple, where the 'men' had previously been waiting (ix. 1, 2).

cherubim: the name given in this chapter to the living creatures of chap. i. See also note on verse 20. What is meant by the cherubim? They are met with in the O. T. in five connexions: guarding Paradise[1] (Gen. iii. 3, 4); referred to in the language of prayer and adoration as close to Yahweh's side (2 Sam. ii. 11; 2 Kings xix. 25; Ps. lxxx. 1, xcix. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 16, &c.), and as ornaments in the most sacred parts of the tabernacle and temple

[1] In the parallel to the Genesis stories in the Masai legends man is driven from Paradise by 'Kilegen,' the morning star.

2 the likeness of a throne. And he spake unto the man clothed in linen, and said, Go in between the whirling *wheels*, even under the cherub, and fill both thine hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter
3 them over the city. And he went in in my sight. Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

(Exod. xxv. 19; Num. vii. 89; 1 Kings vi. 23, &c.); in Ezekiel's vision; the cherub is also mentioned in Ezekiel's song over the Prince of Tyre (xxviii. 14). Taken together, these uses point to an undefined belief in heavenly beings, conceived as non-human, of a peculiarly sacred character. What was the origin of the conception? Doubtless, Semitic; we think at once of the composite animals of Nineveh and Babylon; but the derivation of both word and idea is doubtful. The word has been traced to an Assyrian word *ki-ru-bu*, supposed to refer to the man-bulls that guarded Assyrian palaces, but not known certainly to exist. The connexion of cherubs with lions and oxen in 1 Kings vii. 29 shows at once the affinities and the vagueness of the Israelite idea in historical times. Later, in Enoch, cherubs are connected with the divine worship in Heaven, with Paradise, and the divine fire: cf. the 'living creatures' and their animal forms in Rev. iv. 6, 8 (even to-day the messengers of God are commonly represented with wings). In xxviii. 14 the cherub appears, as nowhere else, to be connected with some definite piece of mythology (see notes thereon).

2. he spake: i. e. Yahweh, still in the temple, sends the 'scribe' to the chariot. Ezekiel sees the whole scene as clearly as Dante sees the ledges on the mount of Purgatory.

coals of fire. Another reminiscence of Isaiah; but how different the purpose for which the coals are used! There they sanctified the prophet; here they suggest that Jerusalem is to be treated like another Sodom (cf. xvi. 46). Ezekiel omits the naïve mention of the 'tongs'; we have no ground, however, for thinking that the contrast between love and wrath, as symbolized respectively by seraph and cherub, could have been present to his mind.

3. the right side: the south. Between the 'house' and the altar were the dead, and to the north the 'abomination.'

the cloud: another reminiscence of Isa. vi. 1. These reminiscences are exactly what we should expect in what is partly a dream state, where the memory is active, though not under normal control.

And the glory of the LORD mounted up from the cherub, 4
and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house
was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the
brightness of the LORD'S glory. And the sound of the 5
wings of the cherubim was heard even to the outer court,
as the voice of God Almighty when he speaketh. And 6
it came to pass, when he commanded the man clothed in
linen, saying, Take fire from between the whirling *wheels*,
from between the cherubim, that he went in, and stood
beside a wheel. And the cherub stretched forth his hand 7
from between the cherubim unto the fire that was between
the cherubim, and took *thereof*, and put it into the hands
of him that was clothed in linen, who took it and went out.
And there appeared in the cherubim the form of a man's 8

4. the cherub: cf. ix. iii. The 'cherub' there is that above the altar, and distinct from the 'cherub' and 'cherubim' of x. 2 and 4, which belong to the chariot.

5. the sound of the wings: cf. i. 24. Yahweh's voice is constantly likened to thunder: cf. Ps. xix. 3–9. The chariot itself moved as Yahweh prepared to approach it.

God Almighty: Hebrew, as R.V. margin, 'El Shaddai' (cf. i. 24). The phrase occurs elsewhere only in Gen. xliii. 14, in the priestly narrative, in Job, in four other poetical passages, and once in Ruth; the origin of the name is unknown.

6. Ezekiel now sees the result of the command given in verse 2; there is no need to suggest textual corruption. 'The whirling (wheels)' is a different word from that used for a single wheel; Ezekiel places the term in the mouth of Yahweh, but does not use it himself: cf. v. 13.

7. the cherub: cf. verses 2, 4. No special cherub seems to be intended. The definite article would suggest the creature nearest to Ezekiel; but the singular and the plural are used as practically interchangeable in this passage; one would always be more prominent to the onlooker than the rest.

stretched forth his hand. This element in the vision is doubtless suggested by Isa. vi. 6; no command is mentioned as being given either to the seraph or to the cherub.

went out, from the temple precincts, to scatter the fire over the city.

8. a man's hand: this had been already noticed in the first vision, i. 8.

9 hand under their wings. And I looked, and behold, four
wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside one cherub,
and another wheel beside another cherub: and the
appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone.
10 And as for their appearance, they four had one likeness,
11 as if a wheel had been within a wheel. When they went,
they went upon their four sides: they turned not as they
went, but to the place whither the head looked they
12 followed it; they turned not as they went. And their
whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their
wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, *even*
13 the wheels that they four had. As for the wheels, they
14 were called in my hearing, the whirling *wheels*. And
every one had four faces: the first face was the face of
the cherub, and the second face was the face of a man,

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x. 9-17. *Second description of the chariot.* The order of the description here differs from that of chap. i (wheels, faces of cherubs, and motion, as against faces, wheels, and motion in chap. i; the throne, in chap. i, is mentioned last). If this is not mere chance, Ezekiel must now be recognizing the various parts of the vision from a different position to that which he occupied relative to the chariot in chap. i (D. H. Müller). Cornill and others regard the whole section as a scribal repetition of chap. i; but if so, the scribe would hardly have made these alterations in the order. Ezekiel is relating his experiences exactly as he received them, though the text is in certain places not free from corruption.

9, 10. Cf. i. 15, 16.

11. A combination of i. 9 and 17.

12. their whole body: Hebrew 'their whole flesh,' which LXX omits. In i. 18 only the felloes of the wheels have eyes. Bertholet suggests that the description is influenced by that of the wheels of the 'laver,' 1 Kings vii. 33. In the last clause, as it stands, the text can only mean 'all four had their wheels'; a slight correction would give 'according to their four wheels.'

13. in my hearing. Cf. note on verse 6.

14. the face of the cherub. In i. 5, 6. 10 we learn that the living creatures had a human appearance, but that they each had four faces, of a man (front), a lion (right), an ox (left), and an eagle

and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubim mounted up: this is the 15
living creature that I saw by the river Chebar. And when 16
the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them: and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels also turned not from beside them. When they stood, these stood; and when they mounted 17
up, these mounted up with them: for the spirit of the living creature was in them. And the glory of the LORD 18
went forth from over the threshold of the house, and stood

(behind). Here Ezekiel sees first the face on the left, but calls it the face, not of an ox, but of 'the' cherub. Unless the text is wrong, the mention of the cherub must imply, as Davidson and Müller hold, that the prophet here identifies with the chariot as a whole ('the cherub' collectively) the animal whose face he noticed most clearly as the chariot moved. The chariot stands at the south side of the temple (to the south of Ezekiel), and moves eastward (verse 19). Hence, if the face of the man is that which looks in front, the face of the leading cherub which Ezekiel sees most clearly will be that on the left of the human face, i. e. the ox-face; taking the rest in order, he will naturally mention the faces of the man, lion and eagle (see Plan G). This explanation is only redeemed from artificiality by recognizing the naïve accuracy of Ezekiel's account. Ezekiel does not need again to describe the throne.

15. This verse anticipates verses 19 and 20; but the verse is not therefore to be struck out here. Whether the chariot actually paused between its second movement here (see verse 5) and the final departure of Yahweh's glory thereon (verse 9) or not, the pause in the description is highly effective. The city is not left till the end of the next chapter; the shrine had been left in ix. 3.

16, 17. Ezekiel now returns to his description of the wheels interrupted in verse 14: cf. i. 19, 20. He specially emphasizes the fact that the quadrilateral arrangement of wheels obviated any necessity of turning. The significance of this can only be that Yahweh's purposes cannot change, but must go straight forward.

x. 18-22. *Yahweh's final departure from the temple.*

18. After the chariot had again risen Yahweh's glory leaves the threshold of the temple, approaches the chariot, and rests above it. Each movement in this desertion of Yahweh's 'secret

19 over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their
wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight when
they went forth, and the wheels beside them: and they
stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house;
and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.
20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of
Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were
21 cherubim. Every one had four faces apiece, and every
one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man
22 was under their wings. And as for the likeness of their

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place' or 'treasury' (vii. 22) is photographed on the prophet's memory.

19. Yahweh leaves the temple by the east gate, and he returns by the same gate in xliii. 4.

20. This verse can only be explained if Ezekiel is understood to be transcribing his own experiences exactly. The thought 'This is what I saw previously by the Chebar' has already entered his mind (verse 15^{b}, if the clause is correct). It recurs here, and he naturally uses the word for the animals which he had previously used, instead of 'cherub,' the word characteristic of this chapter. This recognition of the identity between the two visions he further presses by the last clause of the verse. But why did this second vision suggest to him at first 'cherubim' and not simply 'living creatures'? The question cannot be answered with certainty; we can hardly suppose (with Müller) that in the interval after the vision of chap. i Ezekiel had seen the necessity of guarding against the verbal connexion of Yahweh with animals, since the animal faces, all but the ox, are mentioned in verse 14. König has suggested that the prophet had lately been impressed by the monsters of Babylonian sculpture; but when he saw the first vision Ezekiel had been in Babylon four years. May not the real explanation be that the thought of the cherub in ix. 3, and of the general connexion between cherubs, Yahweh, and the ark (cf. note on i. 11), suggest to the prophet that the winged supporters of the chariot would naturally be cherubim (so also in verse 20^{b}); hence only after an interval does he recognize explicitly that these winged beings are the living creatures of his former vision. This he still further emphasizes in verse 22: 'they did not only appear the same; they were the same.'

21. For 'four' wings, the LXX curiously reads 'eight' here, though not in i. 6: see note on that passage.

faces, they were the faces which I saw by the river Chebar, their appearances and themselves; they went every one straight forward.

Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto 11
the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh east-

xi. *The last pause, and the desertion of the city.* Yahweh has now left the temple, and his glory is resting on the chariot. But a further vision is now accorded to Ezekiel, as if to convince him that the last step—the utter desertion of Jerusalem—is inevitable. After a long address on what the prophet has seen, Yahweh lingers no more, and, as the vision closes, the prophet sees him on the Mount of Olives, with the valley of Kidron separating him from the city-walls.

The chapter falls into two sections: Yahweh's grim comments on the confidence of the Judaean statesmen, dramatically followed by the sudden death of one of their number; and a further message, introduced by another Judaean saying, which for the first time foretells restoration and renewal of spirit, coming like a single gleam of sunshine at the close of a day of storm; immediately afterwards, the chariot has gone.

Is this chapter in its right place? Smend and Kraetzschmar find in it an anti-climax after chaps. ix and x; Kraetzschmar holds that the confidence of the princes can only refer to the months immediately preceding the city's last struggle, and Smend thinks that verse 10, with its reference to Riblah, can only have been written down after the fall of the city. These arguments, however, are not conclusive. The fatal refusal to recognize the real dangers of the situation was characteristic of Judah throughout Zedekiah's reign; the reference to it here has all the tragic elements of Nemesis; and, apart from the possibility of a psychical knowledge of the future, the language of verse 10 is not definite enough to necessitate Smend's contention. See note on verse 1.

xi. 1–13. *The flesh and the caldron.* Ezekiel, after having watched Yahweh's glory mounting the chariot, suddenly finds himself at the east gate of the temple, watching a council of Judaean statesmen; he hears their hope of security, in which trust in Yahweh has no part, and he is commanded to announce to them the entire reversal of their expectation. When he ceases speaking he is terrified to see one of their number fall to the ground dead.

1. Brought me unto the east gate. We must suppose that Ezekiel had been outside the temple by the chariot; the last actual reference to his position was in viii. 16 (in the 'inner court of the Lord's house').

ward: and behold, at the door of the gate five and twenty men; and I saw in the midst of them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah,
2 princes of the people. And he said unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise iniquity, and that
3 give wicked counsel in this city: which say, *The time* is not near to build houses: this *city* is the caldron, and we
4 be the flesh. Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy,

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five and twenty men. Cf. viii. 16. A different Jaazaniah is here mentioned (LXX, as in chap. viii, reads 'Jeconiah'). How could they be here after the destruction of the inhabitants of the city in chap. ix? The different visions of the trance, vivid as they are, are not continuous, and the symbolical destruction of the population does not prevent Ezekiel from being aware that the city is still standing.

Azzur. Hananiah, Jeremiah's opponent, is also called the son of Azzur (Jer. xxviii. 1).

2. devise iniquity. In Zedekiah's reign the most active politicians were on the side of independence and even revolt from Babylon. This, both to Jeremiah (Jer. xxviii. 16, &c.) and Ezekiel, was flat disobedience to Yahweh; it was also treachery to Nebuchadnezzar (see also 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13, which echoes the prophetic view). It was at the same time the result of infatuated pride. In the third place, as is clear from Jeremiah and the allusions in Ezekiel (vii. 23, ix. 9, xi. 6, xxii. 6), the anti-Babylonian party was the party of high-handed violence and oppression. Hence a council of its representatives may well be the subject of the culminating picture of the wickedness in the doomed city.

3. Ezekiel may have known of these expressions from a letter of Jeremiah (see Jer. xxix. 1), or some other friend left behind in Jerusalem. But to what does the first clause refer? Who wished to build houses? Evidently the princes hold themselves to be safe from Nebuchadnezzar; the caldron is the city, which preserves from the fire the flesh placed within it. Nebuchadnezzar will attack them in vain. Ewald and Cornill follow LXX in reading 'Is not the time near since houses were built?' i. e. is not the country just settling down to be really at peace, after the troubles of the invasion of 596 B. C.? But if so, they would not have immediately thought of their fortifications; they mean, 'We cannot carry on our ordinary business; we must keep within the safety of our walls.'

4. The prophet, who has hitherto been a passive spectator,

O son of man. And the spirit of the LORD fell upon 5
me, and he said unto me, Speak, Thus saith the LORD:
Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; for I know the
things that come into your mind. Ye have multiplied 6
your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets
thereof with the slain. Therefore thus saith the Lord 7
GOD: Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it,
they are the flesh, and this *city* is the caldron: but ye
shall be brought forth out of the midst of it. Ye have 8
feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you,
saith the Lord GOD. And I will bring you forth out of 9
the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of
strangers, and will execute judgements among you. Ye 10
shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of
Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. This 11
city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the
flesh in the midst thereof; I will judge you in the border
of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ye 12
have not walked in my statutes, neither have ye executed
my judgements, but have done after the ordinances of

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is called on to prophesy and to express the divine will; so, in xxxvii. 9, he has himself to call to the wind to bring life to the dry bones.

7. With startling suddenness, Ezekiel gives the opposite turn to their words; compare the equally unexpected turn to this expression in xxiv. 3-12 and to the familiar comparison of Israel to the vine in xv. 1-5.

8. Ye have feared the sword. Their self-confidence has really no element of bravery in it; it is merely founded on their trust in material defences, which will prove useless.

10. Nebuchadnezzar actually received his prisoners at Riblah, which was just on the frontiers of the old northern kingdom (2 Kings xxv. 18-21; Jer. lii. 24-7: see also note on vi. 14).

11, 12. These verses are omitted in LXX; and it is easier to believe that a copyist or translator omitted them as superfluous than that Ezekiel, in the excitement of his vision and his utterance, could not have so repeated himself; they are thus probably genuine.

13 the nations that are round about you. And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

14 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel, all of them, *are they* unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get

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13. Those who hold that the whole 'vision scheme' is a literary artifice explain this verse by supposing that the death of Pelatiah suggested the entire 'prophecy' (verses 5-12) to Ezekiel; this does credit neither to Ezekiel's sincerity nor to his literary skill. Davidson thinks that the death of Pelatiah may be symbolical, and that he may actually have died soon after the prophecy (cf. Jer. xxviii. 17). Far more natural is it to suppose that Ezekiel, by clairvoyance, saw a council which was taking place about this time, felt his spirit roused against it in indignant 'prophecy,' and then saw one of its members fall dead, and trembled at the thought of the judgement which he had been pronouncing.

the remnant: those who were left in Jerusalem after the first deportation; Ezekiel had uttered the same cry in ix. 8.

xi. 14-25. *The last words before Yahweh's departure.* Once more the prophet finds a 'text' in the words, or the attitude, of the Judaean leaders; their selfish and entirely unjustified tone of superiority to the exiles is the occasion of a prophecy that the exiles shall at the last be restored—the first prophecy of anything but destruction, and the first words from Yahweh which refer directly to the community of which Ezekiel was a member. How different is the tone of vi. 8. As in the latter chapters, where the prophecy is worked out with far more detail, the order is, first, restoration; and second, the new heart. This promise contrasts strongly with the final announcement of the ruin of the present inhabitants of Jerusalem. With this the long-delayed departure from the city at last takes place; Ezekiel, emerging from his trance, finds himself once more with the exiles, and he describes the visions to them.

15. all the house of Israel. Note the fullness of the expression following the double 'brethren.' It implies that the exiles from the northern kingdom, after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., are also in the prophet's mind.

Get you far from the LORD. To be dragged from the land

you far from the LORD; unto us is this land given for
a possession: therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: 16
Whereas I have removed them far off among the nations,
and whereas I have scattered them among the countries,
yet will I be to them a sanctuary for a little while in the
countries where they are come. Therefore say, Thus 17
saith the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the
peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where
ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land
of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall 18
take away all the detestable things thereof and all the
abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them 19
one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you;

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was to be removed from Yahweh: cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. The remnant in Jerusalem, 'the poorest sort of the people of the land' (2 Kings xxiv. 14), regard themselves as sole possessors of Yahweh's land and of his favour. The imperative 'Get you far' should probably be read (without change of consonants) as the Jewish commentators suggested, in the indicative, 'Ye are far.' Ezekiel's own attitude is that it is not the land but the temple which sanctifies. The irony of this reference is specially bitter when it is so quickly followed by verse 23.

16. a little while. The words mean 'slightly,' either of time or extent. Such a limitation by Yahweh on his promise reads strangely; better, therefore (as the second rendering in R.V. marg.), 'and I have been'—thus accepting for the moment the taunt of the Jerusalemites. 'Sanctuary' means that which confers the holiness of the temple; in the land of exile, Yahweh could only be this to them in the matter of sabbaths and circumcision. It is possible that Ezekiel means here to foretell that the exile will be of short duration; but he does not elsewhere refer to its duration in any way; contrast Isa. xlvi. 13, li. 5, lvi. 1.

18. The third person (cf. verse 16) is here resumed. The first consequence of the return is the purification of the land (cf. Introd. p. 17).

19. one heart: this would be appropriate if the prophet had been speaking of disunion among the exiles. Here we should rather read 'another heart'; so LXX, with only a minute change. The language and the thought alike have been suggested by Deuteronomy and Jeremiah (cf. xxxvi. 26; Deut. v. 29, x. 16,

and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and
20 will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in
my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them:
and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.
21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of
their detestable things and their abominations, I will
bring their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord
22 GOD. Then did the cherubim lift up their wings, and
the wheels were beside them; and the glory of the God
23 of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the
LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon
24 the mountain which is on the east side of the city. And
the spirit lifted me up, and brought me in the vision by
the spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity.
25 So the vision that I had seen went up from me. Then
I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the
LORD had shewed me.

&c.; Jer. xxiv. 7, xxxi. 33, xxxii. 39). 'Flesh,' impressionable and sensitive, is simply the natural opposite of the type of hardness and resistingness, 'stone.' The heart is the seat of the emotions; the spirit is the breath which animates the actions.

21. The sense, though not the language, requires a return to the Jerusalemites. To the unique expression **the heart of their detestable things** we have perhaps a distant echo in xiv. 3. An easy emendation would be 'whose heart goes after their abominations.'

22. Here the movement of the chariot, stayed in x. 18, is at length resumed.

23. the midst of the city. The temple enclosure stood completely within the city boundaries. The chariot crosses the valley of the Kidron immediately to the east, above the Garden of Gethsemane, and rests on the Mount of Olives, which would shut in Ezekiel's view on that side. Probably Ezekiel would see the chariot standing close to the spot on which later Christ was to behold the city and weep over it.

24. When Ezekiel comes to himself he is back again among his fellow exiles. See viii. 3. He then describes his vision experiences; his 'dumbness' must obviously have been of a nature to allow of this. See note on iii. 26.

The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying, Son 12

SECTION IV. SECOND CYCLE OF THREATS (xii–xix).

This section does not begin, like the previous and the succeeding sections (viii. 1 ; xx. 1), with a fresh date. None the less, it is distinct from the preceding chapters, and has a clearly-marked unity of its own. Possibly the temporal separation was much less noticeable than the logical. It would seem that the account of his trance which Ezekiel had given (xi. 25) was not heeded (xii. 3) ; hence he must begin again, to force his hearers to understand. He thus gives two dramatic representations of flight from a beleaguered city (xii. 1–20 : cf. chap. iv, his first message to the people), and follows up these by a direct reply to their familiar expressions of carelessness (xii. 21–8). Next, he turns against the false predictors, men and women, who were responsible for this infatuation, and takes up again the question of individual responsibility thus suggested, in order to apportion the guilt between the deceivers and the deceived (xiii. 1—xiv 11). This leads the prophet further to emphasize this responsibility, and the impossibility of any vicarious deliverance ; if a remnant manages to escape, its miseries will only serve as a terrible example to the exiles (xiv. 12–23). Here the listeners apparently fall back upon the familiar comparison of Israel to Yahweh's vine, and, as in the case of the 'caldron' (xi. 1–13), Ezekiel immediately gives an unexpected and ruthless interpretation to the parable (chap. xv), and thus clears the way for a comprehensive and fierce indictment of the whole of Israel's history, as one prolonged drama of adultery (chap. xvi)—a drama whose last act, however, is to be repentance and self-loathing. Lest this arraignment should lose its effect through its very comprehensiveness, Ezekiel returns to the metaphor of the vine, and, first in symbolical and then in literal description, presses home the guilt of Zedekiah, and concludes with a second though brief and obscure prediction of restoration (chap. xvii). Again he hears, or overhears, the reply of his audience : 'We are being punished for the sins of others!' This recalls him once more to the subject of responsibility (see xiv. 12–23) ; he now considers this in fuller detail, and reaches a conclusion which emphasizes alike the condemnation of chap. xvi and the suggestion of restoration in chap. xvii (chap. xviii). Lastly, as if he suddenly felt the tragic force of all he had said, he bursts forth into a dirge over the last princes of the royal house and the desolation of the vine (chap. xix).

The advance of the prophet's thought in this section is easily recognizable. The subjects of his discourses have been raised before ; now they are treated with more insight and a firmer

of man, thou dwellest in the midst of the rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not, which have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house.
3 Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their

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grasp. This is especially true of Israel's guilt (chap. xvi, the like of which had never yet been heard by Jewish ears); the prediction of the closing scene (xvii. 11–21) and the treatment of the question of the individual (chap. xviii, which rests partly on chap. xiv, partly on chaps. viii and iii). At the same time, the suggestion of rescue or restoration, first heard in xi. 18–20, is clearer, and we have the following three conceptions, as yet imperfectly correlated:—the principle of individual responsibility demands the protection of the righteous and of the repentant sinner (xiii. 23, xviii. 27), and must, when understood, mean obedience to Yahweh (xiv. 11); if the sinner escapes the impending ruin, it is but to enforce further the lesson of Yahweh's unbending justice (xiv. 22); and the reign of disobedience must at last be brought to an end by Yahweh's gift of the new heart. Nothing is as yet said of a peaceful restoration to Palestine; but the still more far-reaching conviction is attained (all the more significant in view of preceding discourses) that Yahweh's will is salvation and not merely punishment, and that the inevitable death of the unrepentant can give him no delight.

xii. 1–20. *The certainty and nearness of the future exile.*

1–8. If the exiles refused to hear, they are now to see. If we may assume that they assembled each day, or at stated days, to hear the prophet, they now find another symbolic act substituted for the usual discourse.

2. eyes to see: one of the most frequent condemnations of Israel: cf. Isa. vi. 9; Jer. v. 21; Deut. xxxix. 3; Mark viii. 18; Acts xxviii. 27. In Ps. cxv. 5 the same language is used of idol deities.

3. stuff for removing: the scanty equipment for the exiles' journey—staff, sandals, knapsack, drinking-cup, &c., such as may be seen on the Assyrian monuments.

remove: the word is specially used of exile; so R.V. marg. Here the whole process of preparation is included.

by day: i.e. openly; the actual journey would take place in the cool of the evening or at night (verse 4).

from thy place. Ezekiel does not say where he went; even

sight: it may be they will consider, though they be
a rebellious house. And thou shalt bring forth thy stuff 4
by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou
shalt go forth thyself at even in their sight, as when men
go forth into exile. Dig thou through the wall in their 5
sight, and carry out thereby. In their sight shalt thou 6
bear it upon thy shoulder, and carry it forth in the dark;
thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground:
for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.
And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my 7
stuff by day, as stuff for removing, and in the even I
digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought it
forth in the dark, and bare it upon my shoulder in their
sight. And in the morning came the word of the LORD 8

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if he actually leaves the limits of the settlement he is back there next morning.

it may be they, &c. Here Ezekiel seems to attribute his own uncertainty to Yahweh.

5. Dig . . . through the wall. Since verse 10 seems to connect the action with Zedekiah, this digging has, by Smend, been interpreted of Zedekiah's sortie and attempted escape (2 Kings xxv. 4); the covering of the face (verse 6) will then refer to Zedekiah's blinding at Riblah. But verse 10 refers the action to the people in general as well as the king. The question whether Tel-abib had a city wall through which Ezekiel could dig a hole is unimportant, not because, as Davidson suggests, 'the actions were probably not actually performed,' but because it would be quite enough for Ezekiel to dig through the wall of his own dwelling. We need not imagine that Ezekiel sets his 'stuff' ready outside, and then takes it inside again to pull it through the hole with him.

6. dark: pitch darkness is here meant.

cover thy face. This can hardly refer to Zedekiah's blinding, for that did not take place till the flight was over. We must suppose that the fugitive king, to whom this action is applied in verse 12, throws a cloak over his head to avoid recognition. Did Ezekiel foresee but refrain from explicitly foretelling Zedekiah's fate? The more probable meaning is that Zedekiah in his last journey was not even to see the land he was deserting. Compare Carlyle's graphic description of the flight to Varennes (*French Revolution*, vol. ii. bk. iv).

8. in the morning. The concreteness of the whole account

9 unto me, saying, Son of man, hath not the house of
Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest
10 thou? Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD:
This burden *concerneth* the prince in Jerusalem, and all
11 the house of Israel among whom they are. Say, I am
your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto
12 them: they shall go into exile, into captivity. And the
prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder
in the dark, and shall go forth: they shall dig through
the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face,
13 because he shall not see the ground with his eyes. My
net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken
in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the
land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he
14 shall die there. And I will scatter toward every wind
all that are round about him to help him, and all his
15 bands; and I will draw out the sword after them. And
they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall disperse
them among the nations, and scatter them through the

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is another difficulty in the way of the view that we have here only a literary device. Ezekiel must surely have known the purpose of what he had been doing; Yahweh's interpretation is given at the point in the story where Ezekiel gives it to his countrymen.

9-16. The interpretation.

10. prince. Ezekiel's usual expression for the kings of Judah. The Hebrew expression involves one of Ezekiel's grim plays on words, and may be represented as 'the leader is this load in Jerusalem'; the word for 'burden' is at once literal and metaphorical. This, however, leaves the second part of the verse very difficult. The text and the margin ('that are among them') of the R.V. are equally possible translations of the Hebrew, but to whom does the word 'they' refer? It is better to omit 'the prince' (the words might rise from an anticipation of verse 12), and read 'that are in the midst of her,' i. e. Jerusalem.

12. ground, or as in margin, 'land.' See note on verse 6.

13. yet shall he not see it. Davidson suggests that, in editing his book, Ezekiel may have made the references to Zedekiah's blinding more distinct; it is more satisfactory, however, to sup-

countries. But I will leave a few men of them from the 16
sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that
they may declare all their abominations among the
nations whither they come; and they shall know that I
am the LORD.

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17
Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy 18
water with trembling and with carefulness; and say unto 19
the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD concern-
ing the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel:
They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their
water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate
from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them
that dwell therein. And the cities that are inhabited 20
shall be laid waste, and the land shall be a desolation;
and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 21, 22

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pose that Ezekiel had a presentiment of the blinding, which the mention of the cloak drew out into expression.

16. a few men. Ezekiel's doctrine of the 'remnant' is strikingly different from that of earlier prophets. The thought here is repeated and amplified in xiv. 22, 23. The heathen cannot then say 'where is now their God?' (Ps. lxxix. 10).

17-20. A further prophecy of the coming desolation.

18. with quaking. The prophet is here commanded to take the plainest food, such as fugitives might eat, and consume it with every sign of fear and haste.

carefulness: the word means dread or anxious care, as if the delay caused by eating might lead to discovery and capture.

19. her land: i. e. the land that is dependent on, or belongs to, the capital, Jerusalem.

xii. 21-6. *Fulfilment is not to be delayed.* This section belongs both to the preceding and the following prophecies. Ezekiel first rebukes those who assure him that he need not trouble them as yet with these messages, and then he naturally turns (in chap. xiii) to the false predictors who are the real sources of this fatal assurance.

of man, what is this proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision
23 faileth? Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The
24 days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering
25 divination within the house of Israel. For I am the LORD; I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall be performed; it shall be no more deferred: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.

, 27 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he
28 prophesieth of times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: There shall none of my words be deferred any more, but the word which I shall speak shall be performed, saith the Lord GOD.

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22. proverb. Cf. xi. 3, xvi. 44, xviii. 2; a 'popular saying.'

the land of Israel. Ezekiel speaks as if he were in Jerusalem, at the side of Jeremiah. The connexion between the exiles and the still standing kingdom was close enough for the 'proverb,' like his own prophecies, to be known in both places: see verse 27.

faileth. The word almost implies a personification of the vision. Cp. 2 Pet. iii. 4. Such an attitude was not wholly unnatural. Isaiah had prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, as well as its salvation. Manasseh ought to have died in exile, and Josiah should have ended his days in peace. Ezekiel, however, like Jeremiah, was justified (see xxxiii. 21) as no other prophet had been, except Isaiah in 701 B.C.

24. Cf. xiii. 10. 16; 1 Kings xxii. 6; and Jer. viii. 11, xiv. 14, xxviii. 2-4, for such 'vain visions.'

26-8. 'The two sections, verses 21-25 and 26-28, are parallel predictions, probably written at different times' (Toy). In the second section the popular attitude is not that prophecy is weak and nerveless, but that it refers to a distant and negligible future; and the prophet's reply omits the 'in your days' of verse 25.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 13 2
of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that
prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy
out of their own heart, Hear ye the word of the
LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD: Woe unto the foolish 3

xiii. *The false prophets and prophetesses.* Ezekiel passes naturally from this ill-founded confidence to its real originators. We meet in the O. T. with three classes of deceivers—(1) false prophets, (2) prophets of Baal, (3) wizards, witches, possessors of 'familiar spirits,' &c. The gap between (1) and (2) would seem to be less clear than that separating both from (3). The prophecy of Yahweh would be as easily confused with that of Baal as was his ritual. The prophet at a shrine of Baal might say, 'Thus saith Yahweh,' and be a prophet of Baal still. What really separated the true prophet from classes (1) and (2) alike was his moral insight. Prediction with him was secondary; with them it was primary. So in the N. T., the material of prophecy (true and false) is psychic; a bad man may be thrown into a rapture, foretell the future, speak with tongues, convert sinners, and cast out devils; it is the difference of spirit which makes Christ able to acknowledge some, while He says to others, 'I never knew you.'

This chapter shows that the gap between the first two classes and the third was not so great as might have been supposed. All shared in a 'superficial conventionalism' (Toy). Balaam was called a prophet; the witch of Endor never was; yet when once prediction was looked for, and offered, divination, and its 'hocus-pocus' of amulets, spirits, and mystic voices was never far off. Compare the stories of Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 40) and Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 6); also Isa. xxx. 10; Amos ii. 12; Jer. ii. 8, v. 31, xiv. 14, xxiii. 9 ff., xxix. 15, 21, 24 ff. For an interesting discussion of the whole question, see A. B. Bruce, *Moral Order of the World*, chap. v. Studies in the temptation to false prophecy will be found in Kingsley's *Hypatia* and Browning's *Mr. Sludge the Medium*.

xiii. 1-7. *The guilt of the false prophets.* Cf. Deut. xiii. 1 ff.

2. prophets of Israel. See note on xii. 22.

out of their own heart: i. e. their predictions are based on their own wishes,—a concise definition of false prophecy. The true prophet will never speak till he can say, 'The word of Yahweh came unto me saying,' &c. 'Heart' is the general word for the emotions and desires; the spirit which inspires them is not Yahweh's, but their own.

3. foolish: the word in Hebrew makes a jingling assonance with the word for 'prophet.' It is elsewhere translated 'churl,'

prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen
4 nothing! O Israel, thy prophets have been like foxes in
5 the waste places. Ye have not gone up into the gaps,
neither made up the fence for the house of Israel, to
6 stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. They have
seen vanity and lying divination, that say, The LORD
saith; and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have
made men to hope that the word should be confirmed.
7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken
a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith;
albeit I have not spoken?
8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Because ye have
spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am
9 against you, saith the Lord GOD. And mine hand shall

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and appears, in 1 Sam. xxv. 3, as the name of Abigail's churlish husband. In Gen. xxxiv. 7; Judges xx. 6; Jer. xxix. 23, &c., it is used of adultery or licentiousness: cf. Jer. xxiii. 14. Folly, in the O.T., always implies more or less of moral guilt rather than mere intellectual incapacity: cf. Proverbs *passim*. The excellent note on this verse in Davidson's *Ezekiel* should be consulted.

4. Ezekiel distinguishes himself from these professional prophets as completely as did Amos (vii. 10–17).

foxes: because of their connexion with ruins ('waste places').

5. To do this Ezekiel himself had at least attempted from the beginning: cf. also xxii. 30.

gaps. R.V. marg. 'breaches.' Cf. Isa. xxx. 13.

the day of the LORD: to the popular expectation, the day of Yahweh's deliverance of his people; to the prophets, the day of Yahweh's punishment of their sins: cf. Amos v. 18; Isa. ii. 12. iii. 18, vii. 20. Here the phrase is used for the day on which Yahweh summons his people to his standard to protect his land.

6. they have made men to hope: better as R.V. marg., 'they have hoped.' The causal sense of the word is very doubtful, and less effective. The prophets know no more about the future than the dupes who listen to their guesswork; they can only hope the guesses will be fortunate.

xiii. 8–16. *The punishment of the deceivers.* When their prophesies of safety and prosperity are falsified by the approaching calamities, they will be among the first to suffer.

9. mine hand shall be against, &c. Almost the same phrase as

be against the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the council of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Because, 10
even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there is no peace; and when one buildeth up a wall, behold, they daub it with untempered *mortar*: say 11
unto them which daub it with untempered *mortar*, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and

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that which Ezekiel uses for his own ecstasies; here in a hostile sense.

council: originally the word means 'couch' or 'custom' (Ps. lv. 15, Job xix. 19); then, as R. V. margin here, 'secret'; so in Prov. xi. 13, xx. 19, xxv. 9; Amos iii. 7.

my people: a naturally rare phrase in the first half of the book.

writing: R. V. margin 'register.' Bertholet believes that such a roll of full Israelite citizens had been kept since the ninth century B.C. Cf. Exod. xxxii. 32; Heb. xii. 23. Here Ezekiel is thinking of a future restoration. The deceivers are high in influence now; afterwards they will not even have a place in the nation itself. As yet this restoration has hardly been hinted at; but the guilt of the prophets implies comparative guiltlessness in the rest of the nation. It may be privileged to enter the land after exile; they must remain outside. Cf. Rev. xxi. 27.

10. a wall. Cf. verse 5. Walls, both literal and metaphorical, were sorely needed at this time. The false prophets persuaded the people that they could regard as defence what was no defence at all (e. g. the help of Egypt, or the earlier prophecies of Yahweh). The word for 'wall' is not used elsewhere; the margin gives 'slight wall.' A cognate Babylonian word, meaning 'wall,' is also used for what is small and mean (i. e. enclosed or circumscribed). However slight the defence, they set to work with dangerous haste to make it appear trustworthy and secure; but the mortar they use will be of no avail. While pretending to lead, they only assist—and their assistance is a fresh source of danger.

untempered: the word (chosen, perhaps, because in sound it suggests the word for 'fall') means whitewash or plaster. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 27.

11. and ye: instead of this sudden change to the second person

ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind
12 shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be
said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have
13 daubed it? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will
even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there
shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great
14 hailstones in fury to consume it. So will I break down
the wall that ye have daubed with untempered *mortar*,
and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation
thereof shall be discovered: and it shall fall, and ye shall
be consumed in the midst thereof; and ye shall know
15 that I am the LORD. Thus will I accomplish my fury
upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with
untempered *mortar*; and I will say unto you, The wall
16 is no more, neither they that daubed it; *to wit*, the
prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem,
and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no
peace, saith the Lord GOD.

Kraetzschmar suggests 'there shall come an overflowing shower, and great hailstones shall fall'; the alteration is slight, and the parallel with verse 13 is thereby preserved.

13. Cf. Matt. vii. 24-7.

14. The discourse now passes from picture to reality; in the coming calamities, the false confidence created or fortified by the deceivers will be destroyed, and they will be ruined in its destruction.

discovered: uncovered, laid bare. Cf. Ps. xxix. 9, where 'discovereth' of the A. V. has been changed in R. V. to 'strippeth bare.'

16. Smend, Siegfried, and Davidson regard this verse, with plausibility, as an exclamation or address.

and there is no peace. Cf. Isa. vi. 14, viii. 11; Mic. iii. 5.

xiii. 17-23. Ezekiel now turns to the women who professed to read the future for payment (verse 19), and, as he hints, were the allies of the false prophets in foretelling a future on principles entirely divorced from morality (verse 22). Ezekiel is writing for those who are familiar with the practices and properties of these

And thou, son of man, set thy face against the 17
daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their
own heart; and prophesy thou against them, and say, 18
Thus saith the Lord GOD: Woe to the women that sew
pillows upon all elbows, and make kerchiefs for the head
of *persons of* every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt
the souls of my people, and save souls alive for your-
selves? And ye have profaned me among my people for 19

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forerunners of modern palmists and fortune-tellers; and we have no satisfactory data for interpreting his allusions. It is clear, however, that Ezekiel's attack is levelled at these miserable creatures, not because they foretell the future, correctly or incorrectly, but because by so doing they predict success to the wicked, who are of course at this time in the majority, and disaster to those who are righteous but uninfluential. True prophetesses, however, are also referred to in the O. T.—Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Noadiah.

17. out of their own heart: cf. verse 2.

18. pillows. The word should be connected with the Assyrian word meaning 'bind'; amulets of some sort are meant; verse 20 shows that the prophetesses wore these themselves also. The Hebrew word for 'hand' can also mean the 'forearm'; these fillets were tied, it would seem, to the elbows.

kerchiefs: mufflers or veils, long enough to reach to the ground. Bertholet compares these with the ephod, or oracular vesture of the priest or spokesman of the divine voice, and with the *Tallith* or prayer-robe of the later Jews; but the fact that these mufflers were worn not by the sorceress, but those who visited her, suggests a simpler explanation; the veil assisted the air of mystery with which it was useful to surround them.

19, 20. They degrade Yahweh's glory into a petty trade of huckstering and lies, of which the pay is miserable enough (cf. Prov. xxviii. 21; Amos ii. 6, 7), but which, by a blasphemous reversal of Yahweh's judgement, pronounces death against the righteous, and promises life to the sinners. There is an unmistakable reference here to the incantations which the sorceresses were doubtless prepared to utter against the innocent foes of their clients. These incantations, however, are to be of no avail; the spells will be broken, and the lives of the innocent will escape like birds loosed from the cage. Ezekiel lived in an atmosphere in which the power of such spells was generally believed in; nor is it indeed altogether killed by modern civilization and science. Tablets

handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people
20 that hearken unto lies. Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make *them* fly, and I will tear them from your arms; and I will let the souls go, even
21 the souls that ye hunt to make *them* fly. Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted;
22 and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Because with lies ye have grieved the heart of the righteous, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way,
23 and be saved alive: therefore ye shall no more see vanity, nor divine divinations: and I will deliver my people out of your hand; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

14 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and
2 sat before me. And the word of the LORD came unto

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containing magical formulae have been found in great numbers on Babylonian sites.

19. profaned me: i. e. Yahweh's name, through being used by the sorceresses (taken in vain), is profaned or degraded to common and unholy purposes. Note that the payment to these women is 'in kind.'

20. to make them fly: this cannot refer to the sorceresses; they desired rather to capture than to scare away; hence, the margin is preferable ('as birds').

23. vanity: as in Ecclesiastes and elsewhere, 'futility,' 'delusion': cf. xxxi. 6; Jonah ii. 8.

xiv. 1–11. From the wickedness of the professed mouthpieces of God Ezekiel now turns to the wickedness of those who inquire of God. In those who sit before him he detects an insincerity which will bring punishment upon men who visit the true as well as the false prophet; this, however, does not of itself exonerate the prophet, who is responsible for the truth of his predictions, and the clearness of his insight into God's purposes.

1. the elders: cf. viii. 1, xx. 1.

me, saying, Son of man, these men have taken their idols 3
into their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their
iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all
by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto 4
them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Every man of the
house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and
putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face,
and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him
therein according to the multitude of his idols; that I 5
may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because
they are all estranged from me through their idols.
Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the 6
Lord GOD: Return ye, and turn yourselves from your
idols; and turn away your faces from all your abomina-
tions. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the 7
strangers that sojourn in Israel, which separateth himself

3, 4. into their heart. A striking phrase. We know that the exile broke the power of idolatry among the Jews; and we nowhere learn definitely from Ezekiel that idols were worshipped in the community of Tel-abib, though that the exiles should have brought such worship with them in 597 B. C. would not have been strange. The contemptuous pictures of idolatry in Isaiah xl–lxvi obviously refer to the heathenism which surrounded the exiles; the descriptions of the debased worship of Yahweh probably refer to what was done in Palestine before or after the exile. But the exiles' condition was more dangerous; they had seated the selfishness and immorality of the old idolatry in the midst of their desires and hopes. How could they seek Yahweh's will to any real purpose? The only answer they could receive would echo their sinful thoughts. Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 6–23, especially verse 15: also the story in the *Iliad* (Bk. i) of the evil dream sent to Agamemnon. Cf. 'in their own heart' (verse 5).

5. that I may take. What we should set down as an inevitable consequence of their sin Ezekiel exhibits, characteristically, as the direct purpose of Yahweh.

7. the strangers. The phrase shows how completely Ezekiel was still, in thought, within the old and undivided Israel. Ezekiel's care for these 'resident aliens' is shown in xxii. 7, 29 and xlvii. 22 (see note thereon).

The word translated 'strangers' in vii. 21, xi. 9, xvi. 32, &c., is

from me, and taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth
the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and
cometh to the prophet to inquire for himself of me;
8 I the LORD will answer him by myself: and I will set
my face against that man, and will make him an
astonishment, for a sign and a proverb, and I will cut
him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know
9 that I am the LORD. And if the prophet be deceived
and speaketh a word, I the LORD have deceived that
prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and
will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.
10 And they shall bear their iniquity: the iniquity of the
prophet shall be even as the iniquity of him that seeketh
11 *unto him*; that the house of Israel may go no more astray
from me, neither defile themselves any more with all
their transgressions; but that they may be my people,
and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

2, 13 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son

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distinct, and means 'foreigners'; the *Ger* (the word used here) is placed on a level with the widow, the orphan, and the 'Levite that is within your gates,' who had no patrimony of his own (Deut. xxvi. 11 and 12). In a society where citizenship and property went together, the position of each of these classes was precarious.

9. A different principle is embodied in the story of Balaam, who, in spite of himself, is forced to tell the unwelcome truth. The sin of the prophet is like that of the inquirer; each wants his own will, not God's. *Quem Deus vult perdere*—or *punire*—*prius dementat.*

I... have deceived that prophet. Cf. iii. 20: 'I lay a stumbling-block before him.' See introductory note to chap. xiii. If a man uses the gift of prophecy wrongly, the gift, and therefore the giver, turn upon him and deceive him.

10. bear their iniquity: i. e. bear its responsibility and its consequences.

11. Cf. xi. 20; the purpose of punishment is warning and peace.

xiv. 12-23. The question of the responsibility of the prophet, thus raised, suggests the larger problem of general responsibility. The

of man, when a land sinneth against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out mine hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast; though these 14
three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. If I cause noisome beasts to pass 15
through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts;

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righteous cannot deliver the wicked. This thesis is expounded with a fullness and emphasis which suggests that the prophet is replying to some objection. What that objection was can be gathered from verses 22, 23. Is there not, the exiles would seem to have asked, a remnant to be saved? Was not this the prediction of former prophets? After pressing home his main contention Ezekiel admits this instance of an exception; 'yes, the remnant shall escape from their doomed city; and the sight of the misery which they will then endure will prove a consolation to you for your own sufferings; you will recognize that the fall of the city is due not to caprice or neglect, but to justice.' Contrast xxi. 3, 4 (and notes *ad loc.*). The thought of this section leads immediately to its twofold elaboration in chaps. xvi and xviii. D. H. Müller points out that the form of this passage is poetic; for the fourfold ruin compare vi. 11.

13. a land. The case is put in general terms; only one land, however, could be in the mind of the prophet or his hearers.

14. Three outstanding and well-known righteous men are here referred to. The mention of Noah is appropriate enough; he was able only to save his own family from the universal destruction of the flood (cf. verse 16). The reason for the mention of Daniel is not so clear. Ezekiel can hardly be referring to the youth mentioned in the book called by his name—who is at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and who is only reaching his maturity at the conquest of Babylon; but that book was written long after the events to which it refers; probably to its author, as to Ezekiel, Daniel was a name honoured by a vague tradition of wisdom and sanctity (cf. xxviii. 3). Job is referred to as the third of these typical 'righteous men.' Again, there is no allusion to the story of Job as we know it. Were it not for this mention we should not have known that the name of Job was familiar to Israelite ears. The book of Job is recognized to be considerably later than Ezekiel. Cf. Jer. xv. 1. Contrast Gen. xviii. 32.

16 though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the
Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters;
they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be
17 desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say,
Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off from it
18 man and beast; though these three men were in it, as I
live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons
nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered them-
19 selves. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and
pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man
20 and beast: though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as
I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither
son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls
21 by their righteousness. For thus saith the Lord GOD:
How much more when I send my four sore judgements
upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the
noisome beasts, and the pestilence, to cut off from it
22 man and beast? Yet, behold, therein shall be left a rem-
nant that shall be carried forth, both sons and daughters:
behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall
see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted
concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem,
23 even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And
they shall comfort you, when ye see their way and their

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20. The phrase here is varied from the plural ('sons') to the singular.

22. The explanation of the apparent exception which really proves the rule. The remnant does not escape punishment.

unto you, to Babylon. That there was to be such a remnant was prophesied in Mic. ii. 12; Isa. vii. 3, viii. 2, ix. 12, &c.; Zeph. iii. 12; Jer. xxiii. 3; it is therefore quite unnecessary to suppose that this passage was only written after the actual appearance of the survivors in Babylon in 587 B. C., in order to justify Ezekiel's own prophecies in vii. 13 and ix. 4. A different reason has already been given for the existence of a remnant in xii. 16.

23. comfort. A 'very different comfort' from that foretold in

doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

15 2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is the vine tree more than any tree, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3 Shall wood be taken thereof to make any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? 4 Behold,

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Jer. xxxi. 13 and announced in Isa. xl. 1. It is akin to the grim thought of xxxi. 16 and xxxii. 31, that the inhabitants of the world of the dead will find some ease in their suffering when others come to join their fate; but there is also the recognition that when God's judgements are seen to be rational and moral, there must be some consolation for those who might have fancied that there was no reason in their affliction. That such suffering was abundantly deserved is made clear by chap. xvi, which implies the guilt both of those who had been already punished by exile, and of those who were being reserved for the further disaster in Jerusalem.

xv. *The Parable of the Vine.* This short chapter may be read either as an interlude or as a prelude to chap. xvi. In any case the sequence of thought is clear. Ezekiel has explained the reason for the oft-repeated prophecy of the salvation of the remnant. Now he faces another thought. Is not the nation the beloved vine of Yahweh? how can she, then, be doomed? Passages like Hos. x. 1; Isa. v. 1; Jer. ii. 21, would be familiar to him and his hearers; but once more he gives a wholly unexpected turn to the thought which has occurred; as regards real utility, this very vine is the most worthless of all trees. By his reference to the 'trees of the forest' (verse 2) and his silence as to the fruit, Ezekiel suggests that Israel is no more than a wild vine. As the consistent foe of the innovations and syncretism of Canaanite society and religion, he has no sympathy with the characteristic Canaanite institution of vine-culture. Wine would suggest to him, as it did to the other prophets, the wanton accompaniments of idolatrous feasts (cf. Amos vi. 6, ix. 14; Hos. iv. 11, ix. 4; Isa. v. 11, xxviii. 7: compare Ezek. xliv. 21; contrast Ps. civ. 15). Ezekiel recurs to the simile of the vine in chaps. xvii and xix, but in a mood hardly less sombre. Contrast the reference to the vine in John xv, and its exposition, perhaps influenced by both chapters, in Mrs. King's *Disciples* (*Ugo Bassi*).

3. The wood of the vine is so useless that you cannot even make a peg out of it.

it is cast into the fire for fuel: the fire hath devoured
both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned; is it
5 profitable for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it
was meet for no work: how much less, when the fire
hath devoured it, and it is burned, shall it yet be meet for
6 any work? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: As the
vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have
given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of
7 Jerusalem. And I will set my face against them; they
shall go forth from the fire, but the fire shall devour
8 them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I
set my face against them. And I will make the land
desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith
the Lord GOD.

16 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

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4. is burned. Cf. Amos iv: 'Ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning.' Ephraim is already destroyed; so is Judah; the remnant left in Jerusalem is really in no better case. Does the use of the perfect tense imply that Jerusalem is already fallen, or, at least, besieged? This is denied by verse 6 ('So will I give') and also by the use of the word here employed, which (from xxiv. 10; Job xxx. 30; Isa. xxiv. 6) implies shrivelling or charring as much as actual destruction.

7. To have survived one catastrophe will not save them from another: cf. xi. 16.

8. trespass: the same word occurs in xiv. 13, and means properly treachery; not of Zedekiah's broken oath to Nebuchadnezzar (chap. xvii), but, as in xiv. 13, of the disloyalty of Israel to her covenant with Yahweh—the thought of which occupies chap. xvi.

xvi. *The Harlotry of Jerusalem, and its punishment.* As the fate of Jerusalem and the questions connected with it (considered in chaps. xiv, xv) grow clearer in the mind of the prophet, he pauses to consider the whole history of the people, and in a long and comprehensive discourse he expounds the history of Israel in the very thinly-veiled allegory of a foundling child; her early beauty (verses 1–14); her adulterous excesses (verses 15–34); her inevitable punishment (verses 35–43); the wickedness that has outdone Sodom and Samaria (verses 44–59); and her final restoration (verses 60–63). The figure of outraged marital love,

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 2
and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem: Thy 3
birth and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite;

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like the description of a call and a commission, links Ezekiel to his predecessors, especially to Hosea (chaps. i–iii) and Jeremiah (chap. iii). The thought of Yahweh as married to his people frequently appears in the prophets (cf. Amos iii. 2; Isa. i. 21, vi. 24: cf. Rev. xxi. 9), and is common to other Semitic religions, where it was the cause of much licentious ritual; to the purer minds of the seers of Israel it meant that all falling away from Yahweh was as shameful as adultery; such is the burden of this chapter, as of chaps. xx and xxiii.

But Ezekiel takes an even darker view of history than the earlier prophets. Amos (v. 25), Hosea (ix. 10), Isaiah (i. 21–26), and Jeremiah (ii. 2) imply a period of loyalty and obedience. To them Israel's sins begin after the entrance into Canaan; the worship of Baal corrupted that of Yahweh. Ezekiel traces Israel's unfaithfulness right back to Egypt (chap. xx). Both the earlier ('prophetic') and the later ('priestly') narratives of the Pentateuch are explicit as to Israel's apostasy in the wilderness. In chap. xx Ezekiel asserts that Yahweh was known and disobeyed even before the Exodus. In the earlier narratives (of Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, and David) there is no hint of this settled rebelliousness; the relations between Yahweh and his people are described there as on the whole natural and unstrained; but it is not strange that later writers, looking back in the darker days of the seventh and sixth centuries, should regard the nation's story as one long crime. And it is this view of history which has dominated the whole historical tradition of Israel; even the rise of the kingship is regarded as a falling away from Yahweh, just as, after Ezekiel's time, the very existence of the northern kingdom was an act of schism. To the Jewish writer, history was valuable, not as the record of past events, but as the illustration and enforcement of an eternal principle. This reference to sexual impurity, as typical of the loathsomeness of all sin, is found nowhere outside Judaism and Christianity.

xvi. 1–14. The miserable birth of Israel; her rescue by Yahweh, and his loving care over her in her girlhood.

3. the land of the Canaanite. It is noteworthy that Ezekiel does not in these chapters refer to the patriarchs (contrast chaps. xxxiii. 24, xxviii. 25, xxxvii. 25); and in this chapter he only hints at the sojourn in Egypt (verse 7). He speaks of Israel as a Canaanite tribe, sprung from the original inhabitants of the land, and hence of a stained and corrupted lineage in spite of the contention of chap. xviii).

the Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was an
4 Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast
born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in
water to cleanse thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor
5 swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of
these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou
wast cast out in the open field, for that thy person was
6 abhorred, in the day that thou wast born. And when I
passed by thee, and saw thee weltering in thy blood, I
said unto thee, *Though thou art* in thy blood, live; yea,
7 I said unto thee, *Though thou art* in thy blood, live. I
caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou

Amorite: cf. Gen. xv. 6; Amos ii. 9, &c., where the Amorites are spoken of as the original inhabitants of Palestine. The cuneiform name for Palestine is 'Land of the Amorites,' though this was later restricted to North Palestine. Properly, the Amorites were the highlanders, as the Canaanites with their iron chariots and their wealth were the lowlanders.

Hittite: the Hittites appear as the earlier inhabitants in Gen. x. 15, &c.; so in the Tel-el-Amarna letters; in Judges i. 10 the people of Hebron (called Hittites in Gen. xxiii. 3, 10) are called Canaanites. They must be distinguished from the powerful Hittites of the north. Cf. Deut. xxvi. 5.

4. cleanse: A.V. 'supple.' The word, which is not translated by the LXX, does not occur elsewhere; the cognate Assyrian word means washing, necessary, in the Semitic world, on ritual as well as physical grounds.

salted. This rite is still customary; salt is also the recognized medium of a covenant.

5. the open field: a very realistic description of exposure. In Arabian tribes girls were often deserted after birth, or buried alive (Qor. lxxxi. 8). Compare Hos. i. 6.

6. weltering: referring to the random kicking movements of an infant's feet; the word occurs only here and in verse 22.

Though thou art **in thy blood, live:** i. e. filthy and neglected as you are, you are to live, and not die. Most commentators agree with the LXX that the repetition is an error. Smend suggests that the first of the two sentences might go with what precedes, and the second with what follows. Yahweh speaks in sharp contrast to the neglect of the child's own parents.

7. The historical reference of verse 6 is apparently to the rescue

didst increase and wax great, and thou attainedst to excellent ornament; thy breasts were fashioned, and thine hair was grown; yet thou wast naked and bare.
Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, 8
behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed 9
I thee with water; yea, I throughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed 10
thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with sealskin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and covered thee

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from famine in Canaan; verse 7 will then describe the growth of the nation in Egypt.

excellent ornament: probably the word implies a reference to the girl's growth to physical maturity.

naked and bare: she was only a poor Bedouin girl still; a reference to the poverty of the desert shepherds who found their way into Egypt from time to time, and left it as poor as they entered it.

8. I spread my skirt, or mantle, as part of the ceremony of marriage; compare the German 'Mantelkind,' and Ruth iii. 9. Israel entered into covenant with Yahweh at Sinai.

9. Kraetzschmar would place this verse immediately after verse 6; this would be so obvious a position that we should hardly expect it in that case to have been altered. A ceremonial washing took place before marriage (Ruth iii. 3; Esther ii. 12; Judith x. 3). Not until this point is the girl taken from her squalid surroundings. Observe that everything is done for her by her protector.

10. sealskin: in Exod. xxv. 5. Num. iv. 6 the material of one of the coverings of the ark; R.V. marg. 'porpoise.' The walrus and the dugong have been suggested. Delitzsch identifies it with the skin used for covering the planks of the boats on the Euphrates (cf. Herod. i. 194), or, when inflated, supporting them. This might seem too clumsy a material for a girl's sandals; Kraetzschmar suggests 'Egyptian leather.'

fine linen, or byssus; white, as worn by Egyptians (Gen. xli. 42) and priests (Exod. xxvi. 1).

covered, with a mantle reaching from head to foot.

11 with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put
12 bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And
I put a ring upon thy nose, and earrings in thine ears,
13 and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast
thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was
of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst
eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast ex-
ceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper unto royal
14 estate. And thy renown went forth among the nations
for thy beauty; for it was perfect, through my majesty
which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.
15 But thou didst trust in thy beauty, and playedst the
harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy

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silk: the word is obscure, and does not occur outside this chapter. Silk is not mentioned as dyed by the Phoenicians till after the sixth century B.C.

11. Ezekiel is still describing the usual attire of a wealthy Hebrew bride. Compare the remarkable catalogue of female ornaments in Isa. iii. 18–24.

12. crown: a bridal adornment which in this context suggests the kingdom; cf. 'unto royal estate' (which LXX omits) in verse 13.

13. fine flour: cf. verse 19; also Deut. xxxii. 13, 14; Ps. lxxxi. 16. Ezekiel does not mention wine, nor does he include wine among articles of sacrifice. Hebrews, like other Oriental peoples, were vegetarians, except on rare occasions.

14. This would be true of Israel in the palmy days of David and Solomon. Note how the allegory lends itself to Ezekiel's contention that all this beauty was entirely the gift of the nation's protector, Yahweh himself; and not a word is said of any love or gratitude on the side of the nation.

xvi. 15-34. With true literary insight the climax is made to introduce the contrast. Israel's blessings proved her fall. The literal truth begins at once to break through the metaphor. We grow more conscious of the rising indignation of the prophet as he advances; two kinds of guilt, however, are distinguished—that of the high places and the idolatry indigenous to Palestine, and that of the foreign worships.

15. because of thy renown. It was Solomon's success as a diplomatist which led him into the temptation of foreign religious

whoredoms on every one that passed by; his it was.
And thou didst take of thy garments, and madest for thee 16
high places decked with divers colours, and playedst the
harlot upon them: *the like things* shall not come, neither
shall it be *so*. Thou didst also take thy fair jewels of 17
my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and
madest for thee images of men, and didst play the harlot
with them; and thou tookest thy broidered garments, 18
and coveredst them, and didst set mine oil and mine
incense before them. My bread also which I gave thee, 19

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influences. Israel was ready to ally herself with and imitate 'every one that passed by'; the expression is strengthened in verse 25.

his it was: the phrase is not in the LXX, and seems to have been inserted by mistake from the words at the end of verses 16 and 19. If it stands, it should be translated 'let it be his,' as if the woman's own words are being quoted.

16. high places. The word has no Hebrew etymology, but is common in all parts of the O. T., and occurs on the Moabite Stone; these high places (which successive kings of Judah failed or refused to remove) were probably dedicated to Yahweh, but were regarded by Ezekiel and other prophets as idolatrous. The reference here must be to sacred tents on these hill-shrines. Cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 7.

The last clause of the verse cannot be translated save by making some very doubtful addition. Ewald suggests that the original words were 'Shame! abomination!'

17. Paul's account of the rise of idolatry in the Gentile world (Rom. i. 19-24) is strikingly similar. God makes Himself known; but human pride and selfishness misuse His gifts and His revelation; hence the shame and ruin of heathenism.

images of men. From the high places Ezekiel turns to the images. Carrying on the metaphor, he calls the figures images of rivals to the woman's true husband. The 'teraphim' may have been in human form (compare the story of Michal, 1 Sam. xix. 13); but Yahweh was oftener worshipped under the form of an ox. Some, comparing Isa. lvii. 8, have found here an allusion to the worship of the phallus: but of this there are no unambiguous traces in the O. T.

18. them: i. e. the idols. Yahweh's own gifts are thus squandered on his rivals. So also the oil and the incense are the gifts of the husband.

fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee,
thou didst even set it before them for a sweet savour,
20 and *thus* it was; saith the Lord GOD. Moreover thou
hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast
borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them
to be devoured. Were thy whoredoms a small matter,
21 that thou hast slain my children, and delivered them up,
in causing them to pass through *the fire* unto them?
22 And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou
hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou
wast naked and bare, and wast weltering in thy blood.
23 And it is come to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe,
24 woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD,) that thou hast

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19. honey, as an offering to Yahweh, is forbidden, like leaven in Lev. ii. 11, and is not included in the offerings mentioned by Ezekiel in chaps. xl-xlviii. It was one of the most familiar products of Palestine, and was probably used in idolatrous rites; it was also offered to the gods of Babylonia, and occurred in Athenian ritual. The adulterous wife offered not only her clothes but her food to her paramours.

thus it was: the word thus translated is unintelligible as it stands. Cf. note on verse 16.

20. Idolatry was not the worst; children were sacrificed. References to this horrible rite are not infrequent: see 2 Kings xvi. 3, xvii. 17, xxi. 6: also for the prophetic attitude, Mic. vi. 7; Jer. vii. 31, xix. 5; Isa. lvii. 5; from which it is plain that children were thus offered to Yahweh; see also Deut. xviii. 10; Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 2-5. From the account in 2 Kings iii. 27, the Israelites regarded it as of immense influence; and its existence in much earlier times is implied by Gen. xxii. It would seem to have become common in Judah only at the time of Ahaz. See also on xx. 25.

21. my children: a note of humanity, for which we may compare Jonah iv. 11. Evidently, however, from this verse, these sacrifices, like others, were killed before the fire touched them.

22. The insertion of such an appeal at this point is surely a touch of genius. But it is to Israel's helplessness, not to her early piety (like Hosea and Jeremiah) that Ezekiel appeals.

23. The parenthesis is omitted in the LXX; a copyist, however, would hardly have thought of inserting it.

built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee
a lofty place in every street. Thou hast built thy 25
lofty place at every head of the way, and hast made
thy beauty an abomination, and hast opened thy feet to
every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredom.
Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians, 26
thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast multiplied thy
whoredom, to provoke me to anger. Behold therefore, 27
I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have
diminished thine ordinary *food*, and delivered thee unto the
will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines,

24. eminent place: more probable than the translation of the margin ('vault, chamber'). The idols have prominent positions made for them, like the statues in Athens (where, it was said, there lived more gods than men) or the images of the Madonna in Italian cities. See note on xliii. 13.

25. head of the way: the street corner, where all would pass and could pause to worship. The expression in xxi. 21 is different.

26. fornication. Ezekiel now turns to Judah's foreign alliances; the sin, however, is the same; for a political was also a religious union, as is shown by the histories of Solomon and Ahab. In the 'Assumption of Moses,' v. 3, the Maccabaean treaty with Rome is stigmatized as 'fornication.'

with the Egyptians. When was this? The mention of the Philistines in verse 27 would suggest the early years in Canaan. Egypt, whose suzerainty over Palestine had been decaying in the fourteenth century (as shown by the Tel-el-Amarna letters), may have tried to regain her influence by winning over the Hebrew conquerors. There is no hint of this in Judges; Egypt remained weak politically till the eleventh century, and Ezekiel probably refers to Solomon's alliance with Egypt; but cf. 2 Chr. xxviii. 18.

great of flesh: a significant reference to Israel's sensuality. The Egyptians on their own monuments are always slender, while the Assyrians represented themselves as muscular and stout.

27. thine ordinary food, or 'allowance' (as marg.): cf. verse 19. Famine is uniformly represented by Ezekiel, and also by Amos (iv. 6), as a divine judgement.

daughters of the Philistines: cf. 2 Sam. i. 20. 'Daughters,' in the regular Hebrew idiom, means 'allied or dependent townships.' The fact that the city of Jerusalem was not in the hands of Israel before David's time shows that Ezekiel is thinking of the whole nation. The sarcasm is as biting as in verses 47, 51.

28 which are ashamed of thy lewd way. Thou hast played
the harlot also with the Assyrians, because thou wast
unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them,
29 and yet thou wast not satisfied. Thou hast moreover
multiplied thy whoredom in the land of Canaan, unto
30 Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. How
weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou
doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish
31 woman; in that thou buildest thine eminent place in the
head of every way, and makest thy lofty place in every
street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou
32 scornest hire. A wife that committeth adultery! that
33 taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give
gifts to all harlots: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy
lovers, and bribest them, that they may come unto thee
34 on every side for thy whoredoms. And the contrary is

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29. Canaan: the word 'Canaanite' was also a general term for a merchant. Hence the R. V. marg. 'land of traffic' is to be preferred. Cf. xvii. 4.

30. The grammatical form used here for 'thy heart' might easily be rendered, as by the LXX, 'thy daughter.' Probably the text is faulty.

imperious, because scorning a prostitute's hire (verse 31), or because, like a princess, she could fulfil all her desires without any one to hinder her.

31. Partly repeated from verse 24.

32. Ezekiel pauses to give the full effect to his allegorical representation of Judah's sin, which has been not simply adultery, but shameless prostitution as well, and even worse than that (verse 33). The double sin is equally clear in Hos. ii. The fact that this verse occurs in a different form in the LXX has suggested to Smend and others that it is a gloss; this is by no means certain.

33. They, indefinite: 'people.'

thy gifts: the tribute paid to Assyria, or Babylon, out of the wealth which Yahweh had given to Judah (cf. 2 Kings xvi. 8, where Ahaz surrenders the temple treasures). The word used here is closely similar to the Babylonian word for dowry; the woman gives even this to her lovers (cf. verses 17 and 18).

in thee from *other* women in thy whoredoms, in that none followeth thee to commit whoredom: and whereas thou givest hire, and no hire is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Thus 35, 36
saith the Lord GOD, Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers; and because of all the idols of thy abominations, and for the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; therefore behold, I will 37
gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them against thee on every side, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as 38

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34. none followeth thee: a piece of still bitterer invective, which, by the repetition in the last clause, Ezekiel desires to make specially emphatic.

xvi. 35-43. As the sins of Jerusalem sprang directly from misuse of her blessings, her punishment shall be the direct result of her sins; her 'pleasant vices' shall be made the very instruments to plague her. The historical analogue is exact; it was Judah's coquetting with Assyria which brought the Assyrian legions into her own territories. Cf. 2 Kings xvi. 7 and Isa. vii. 1, 2, 17.

35. All the scorn of the previous section is gathered up into the insulting appellative.

36. filthiness: literally, as the margin points out, 'brass.' If so, why should not silver or gold have been mentioned? The Hebrews had no copper money. From verse 15, and xxiii. 8, and Babylonian analogies, the word probably means here 'licentiousness.'

37. that thou hast hated: either Philistines and Edomites, with whom no alliances had been made, or, as the expression implies, the lovers of whom Judah had become weary and had grown to loathe; the word has this meaning in Prov. v. 12.

38. Literally, 'and I will make thee blood of my fury,' &c.; a very harsh phrase, but not impossible here. All the old tenderness has now gone.

women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and
39 I will bring upon thee the blood of fury and jealousy. I will
also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down
thine eminent place, and break down thy lofty places;
and they shall strip thee of thy clothes, and take thy fair
40 jewels: and they shall leave thee naked and bare. They
shall also bring up an assembly against thee, and they
shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with
41 their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with
fire, and execute judgements upon thee in the sight of
many women; and I will cause thee to cease from playing
the harlot, and thou shalt also give no hire any more.
42 So will I satisfy my fury upon thee, and my jealousy
shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be
43 no more angry. Because thou hast not remembered the
days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things;
therefore behold, I also will bring thy way upon thine
head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit
this lewdness above all thine abominations.

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40. assembly: a solemn gathering to execute judgement.

stone thee. Cf. xxiii. 45, Lev. xx. 10, and John viii. 5 on the punishment of the adulteress.

thrust through: the word does not occur elsewhere; it would seem to refer to the punishment of oath-breaking, which was (in the curse regularly invoked by those who made the covenant) to be cut asunder like the victim by whose sacrifice the oath was ratified. The allegory is thus still maintained; though the line between allegory and literal prediction is growing uncertain.

42. Any judgement as to the seeming harshness of this 'anthropopathism,' whereby Yahweh is represented as 'raging himself out,' should be modified by recollecting that we are not yet free of the allegory. The expression itself implies restoration and returning favour (cf. verse 60); but it is surely precarious to omit the words, for this reason, with Cornill and Siegfried.

43. thy youth, and the love I then showered on thee, and the covenant I made with thee (cf. verse 60).

(**this**) **lewdness.** 'This' is not in the Hebrew, and the

Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use *this* 44
proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is
her daughter. Thou art thy mother's daughter, that 45
loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art
the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands
and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and
your father an Amorite. And thine elder sister is Samaria, 46
that dwelleth at thy left hand, she and her daughters:
and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand,
is Sodom and her daughters. Yet hast thou not walked 47
in their ways, nor done after their abominations; but,
as *if that were* a very little *thing*, thou wast more corrupt
than they in all thy ways. As I live, saith the Lord 48
GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her
daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.

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sense is perfect and not future, nor can we suppose that Judah's past sins do not merit this name. A slight alteration, suggested by Kraetzschmar, would give, 'Oh, that thou hadst not committed lewdness!' but in any case the distinction between 'lewdness' and the other 'abominations' is obscure (cf. verse 58). Does Ezekiel wish that the sin of Judah had at least been free from this stain of sensual faithlessness?

xvi. 44-58. Further emphasis on the iniquity of Judah, which is greater than that of either Sodom or Samaria; Judah will find that she is placed on a level with those despised sinners.

44. the mother: the Hittite of verse 3; a further sarcasm.

45. her husband: this can refer neither to the Amorite nor to Yahweh (Theodoret), as if he were the real husband even of the heathen (cf. 'their husbands'), but to the general wickedness of heathenism in which Judah is only 'taking after' her despised family.

46. elder, because of greater size and historical importance.
left, i. e. north; the beholder is understood to face the east.
daughters. See note on verse 27.

47. a very little: the Hebrew word for 'as if it were a little' is followed in the text by an unknown word, which has been doubtfully explained either as a part of the word for 'small' or connected with a supposed Assyrian word for 'little.' Hence the 'very little' of the Revisers. Bertholet suggests 'only a little

49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride,
fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in
her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of
50 the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and
committed abomination before me: therefore I took
51 them away as I saw *good*. Neither hath Samaria com-
mitted half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine
abominations more than they, and hast justified thy
sisters by all thine abominations which thou hast done.
52 Thou also, bear thine own shame, in that thou hast given
judgement for thy sisters; through thy sins that thou hast
committed more abominable than they, they are more
righteous than thou: yea, be thou also confounded, and
bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.
53 And I will turn again their captivity, the captivity of
Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria
and her daughters, and the captivity of thy captives in

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time, and thou hast done.' 'Little' might be temporal, but Ezekiel allows no 'morning cloud goodness' (Hos. vi. 4).

49. There is no reference here to the specific sin of Sodom, as related in Gen. xix; but Sodom's guilt was older, and rested on the pride and fullness here mentioned (Gen. xiii. 10, xviii. 20: cf. Matt. x. 15; Rev. xi. 8).

51. justified: i. e. thou hast made them appear guiltless, in comparison with the enormity of thy sins; so verse 52.

52. given judgement: in 1 Sam. ii. 25 the word is translated 'to entreat for.' The meaning is that Judah, standing before the judgement seat weighed down with her own load of guilt, makes the sentence upon Sodom and Samaria comparatively a light one.

53. Samaria and Sodom are to be restored with Judah. The promise of restoration is given in verse 60 as if it were the first; but such a restoration as is here (verse 53) foretold would be to the Jews no true establishment of Yahweh's covenant, but only an aggravation of their misery. Ezekiel's words imply the existence already of the exclusiveness and national pride which was so marked a feature of later Judaism (cf. Juvenal, xiv. 103, 'Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti'). Israel's restoration is foretold also in xxxvii. 15, xlviii. 1 ff. In xlvii. 9 the Dead Sea is to be cleansed, but nothing is elsewhere hinted of a resurrection of

the midst of them: that thou mayest bear thine own 54
shame, and mayest be ashamed because of all that thou
hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them. And 55
thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to
their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall
return to their former estate, and thou and thy daughters
shall return to your former estate. For thy sister Sodom 56
was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride;
before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of 57
the reproach of the daughters of Syria, and of all that
are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines,
which do despite unto thee round about. Thou hast 58
borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the
LORD. For thus saith the Lord GOD: I will even deal 59
with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the
oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will 60

Sodom; nor of the restoration of an independent Northern Kingdom (verse 55).

54. comfort: cf. note on xiv. 23.

55. Ezekiel here implies the destruction of Jerusalem, so often explicitly foretold to his hearers.

56. Why should Sodom have been mentioned by Judah, if she had long since fallen? Kraetzschmar and others prefer the interrogative form, 'Was not Sodom a by-word in thy mouth?'

57. The first clause should read 'before thy shame (or nakedness) was uncovered.'

Syria (Aram) should surely be Edom; the alteration from the one Hebrew name to the other would be exceedingly small. The 'reproach' is the spiteful exultation of her neighbours over the calamities of Judah: see notes on xxv. 12 and xxxv. 5.

58. borne: i. e. borne the shame and guilt of thy sins; 'you have been no longer able to conceal them or put them from you': cf. verse 54.

xvi. 59-62. When Judah's sin is requited she shall be restored to her former relations with Yahweh. When she recognizes the level to which her sin has sunk her, her shame will keep her from a repetition of her sin.

59. Yahweh himself must act according to the law of retaliation.

60. I will remember. The pronoun is here emphatic; since

remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting
61 covenant. Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder *sisters* and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee
62 for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know
63 that I am the LORD: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame; when I have forgiven thee all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

Judah will not turn, Yahweh must shame her through goodness. This is the first clear covenant passage in Ezekiel: cf. Jer. xxxii. 40 and l. 5, and Ezek. xxxvii. 26.

61. be ashamed. Any joy at restoration is neutralized by shame, especially at the thought that Sodom shares the new mercy. Cf. xii. 16. Ezekiel is here describing the lower shame, that blushes to find itself numbered with despised transgressors, rather than the higher shame, which recognizes the pollution of sin itself.

sisters: the grammatical forms imply that other cities besides Sodom and Samaria will be joined to Judah, though they will now be in a subordinate relation, as 'daughters.'

not by thy covenant: the whole restoration flows from Yahweh's free act of grace; Judah has no claim. So St. Paul (Rom. ii. 3) warns the self-righteous Jew not to think that the continued goodness of God is a sign of his own righteousness instead of an inducement to repentance.

62. that I am the LORD. The familiar phrase occurs in a new context; but both in punishment and in restoration Yahweh is revealing his true character.

63. when I have forgiven thee. The first mention of forgiveness in the book. The order in Ezekiel's mind is, first, the bringing home of sin to the sinner's mind and conscience by punishment; then, forgiveness; and lastly, after the exhibition of God's grace and mercy, shame and self-loathing. Cf. xxxvi. 31, 32. The whole prophecy of future mercy here is curt, as if Ezekiel, like Jonah, almost grudged it. Perhaps we ought to wonder that it exists at all after such an indictment. In the second half of the book the promises are richer: cf. xxxvi. 24–30, 33–38, xxxvii. 21–28. But the prophet is far from contemplating

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 17 2
of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the
house of Israel; and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: 3
A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, full of

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that exuberance which could make the exiles 'break forth into joy.' The Jews had to wait for the end of the exile before, in Ezekiel's successor, God 'commended' to them His salvation and His love.

xvii. *The Parable of the Two Eagles, the Cedar and the Vine.* After the comprehensive attack on the whole spirit of Judah since she began to be a nation, Ezekiel now reviews the actual sins of the present. Perhaps he has already been met by the objection which he quotes at the beginning of the next chapter. In any case, his thoughts turn from the fathers to the children; and he now makes use of the familiar idea of Israel as the vine to describe the actual treachery of Zedekiah. Smend urges that at this time, between the sixth and seventh years of Zedekiah's reign, he was not yet in rebellion; Nebuchadnezzar's expedition against Jerusalem did not take place till Zedekiah's ninth year; but Jeremiah (xxvii) makes it plain that treacherous plans, such as are referred to in verse 15, must have been in hand for some time previously. Had the chapter been a case of 'prediction after the event,' verse 20 would presumably have been less vague.

xvii. 1–10. A great eagle carries off a cedar-twig into a land of merchants, and plants a vine on fertile and well-watered soil; it turns, however, not to him but to another eagle; naturally the first eagle will pluck it up by the roots and leave it to wither.

2. a riddle, as distinct from a 'proverb' in xvi. 44, cr xviii. 2. The riddle is properly a description or story in which the relation between the persons or things described corresponds to the relation between persons or things familiar to the speaker and hearer. It is distinguished from an allegory by the attempt to disguise from the hearers what, when they learn the answer, will seem ridiculously obvious. Cf. Samson's riddle (Judges xiv. 14); in this form riddles are found in the most primitive as well as the most advanced societies. Here, by the addition of literary amplifications, the riddle practically becomes an allegory; though doubtless the prophet desired, at least at first, to puzzle his audience and keep them in suspense. The same element of suspense is prominent in Nathan's parable, 2 Sam. xii. 1–12, &c., and it is not absent in the parables of the Gospels.

3. The eagle, as the type of the conquering plunderer, is found in Hos. viii. 1; Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. xlviii. 40; Isa. xlvi. 11, &c.

feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon,
4 and took the top of the cedar: he cropped off the top-
most of the young twigs thereof, and carried it into
5 a land of traffic; he set it in a city of merchants. He
took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in
a fruitful soil; he placed it beside many waters; he set it
6 as a willow tree. And it grew, and became a spreading
vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him,
and the roots thereof were under him: so it became
a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.
7 There was also another great eagle with great wings and
many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend its roots
toward him, and shot forth its branches toward him,
from the beds of its plantation, that he might water it.

The cedar here may have been suggested by the cedar palace of the kings of Judah; cedars naturally suggest Lebanon.

4. the topmost of the young twigs: Jehoiachin. The land of traffic is Babylon, as in xvi. 29; traffic as yet was foreign to the Israelite genius.

5. the land is here Judah itself, the 'seed' being Zedekiah.

he placed. The letters which are represented by this word do not form any known Hebrew word: cf. note on xvi. 47. Possibly they are a repetition of part of the word translated 'he took' at the beginning of the verse.

willow. A willow cannot turn into a vine; but possibly the mention of 'many waters'—a necessity in Palestine for anything like luxuriant growth—suggests the tree which specially needs water. The word, however, does not occur elsewhere, and may simply denote a succulent plant.

6. of low stature. Nebuchadnezzar's policy was naturally to keep Judah weak and dependent on Babylon (verse 14); it was equally natural that Judah should try to escape from such a position. Ezekiel's complaint is that this was done after an oath of allegiance had been given.

The second eagle, as representing Pharaoh, is more briefly described than the first.

7. beds: probably trellises or terraces. Since the soil is so well watered (verses 5, 8,), the wish of the vine for more water is plainly superfluous.

It was planted in a good soil by many waters, that it 8
might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit,
that it might be a goodly vine. Say thou, Thus saith 9
the Lord GOD: Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up
the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it
may wither; that all its fresh springing leaves may
wither; even without great power or much people to
pluck it up by the roots thereof? Yea, behold, being 10
planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when
the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the beds
where it grew.

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 11
Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these 12
things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon came
to Jerusalem, and took the king thereof, and the princes
thereof, and brought them to him to Babylon; and he 13
took of the seed royal, and made a covenant with him; he
also brought him under an oath, and took away the mighty
of the land: that the kingdom might be base, that it 14
might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant
it might stand. But he rebelled against him in sending 15
his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him

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9. Nebuchadnezzar will not need a large army to accomplish his first vengeance on so disloyal a dependant. Note that here the 'riddle' is dropped for the moment.

10. east wind: cf. Gen. xli. 6; Ezek. xix. 12. Nebuchadnezzar is also the great Eastern power. The figure of the east wind describes the ruin referred to as 'plucking up' in verse 9.

xvii. 11–21. The interpretation might hardly be considered necessary, except that two fresh elements are added, the fact that an oath was broken, and that the oath was really to Yahweh, and not simply to the Babylonian monarch (verses 13, 18, 19).

12. See 2 Kings xxiv. 10–16. For Ezekiel's view of Nebuchadnezzar, see Introd. p. 16.

horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? shall he break the covenant,
16 and yet escape? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with
17 him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, when they cast up mounts and build
18 forts, to cut off many persons. For he hath despised the oath by breaking the covenant; and behold, he had given his hand, and yet hath done all these things; he shall
19 not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, I will even bring it upon his own
20 head. And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall

15. horses: cf. 1 Kings x. 28; 2 Kings xviii. 23. To the Israelites, who were properly mountaineers, horses were always strange (cf. Amos vi. 12), and even terrible (Job xxxix. 19-25).

16. in the midst of Babylon: i. e. in a defiled land. Ezekiel himself, however, nowhere expresses any consciousness of being condemned to pollution as living in exile.

17. Pharaoh: Hophra, who reigned from 588 to 570 B. C. See Jer. xxxvii. 5-8; cf. also Lam. iv. 17. Kraetzschmar argues that 'Pharaoh' should be omitted, and that the sense is 'neither shall he (the 'king' mentioned in verse 16) deal with him with a great army.' This secures the parallel with verse 9; 'his' is not in the Hebrew text; and the insertion of Pharaoh may well be due to a copyist who, unlike Ezekiel, had the events of the siege in his memory.

18. For this oath-breaking, cf. Deut. xxix. 25, and an inscription of Assurbanipal, which makes the Arabians ask, 'Why have we suffered this disaster?' the answer being, 'Because we broke the oath we made to Assurbanipal and sinned against his forgiveness.'

19. mine oath. Even to an alien oaths must be kept; i. e. not only Israelites but foreigners are here recognized as being members of a moral society, a sin within which is a sin against Yahweh: cf. Ps. li. 4.

20, 21. A characteristic amplification of punishment; the riddle is here left behind. For the 'remnant,' see note on xii. 16.

be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. And all his fugitives in all his 21
bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward every wind: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will also take of the lofty 22
top of the cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the topmost of his young twigs a tender one, and I will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain 23
of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees 24

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xvii. 22-24. *The future growth of the cedar.* Yahweh will himself plant a cedar-twig, which is to grow into a great cedar-tree; and all the trees will learn Yahweh's power to fling down and to exalt.

This passage gives us the first prediction of an ungrudging restoration, through the medium of a Messiah; as is Ezekiel's wont, he expresses his thought more fully later on (xxi. 32, xxxiv. 24, xxxvii. 24). With two exceptions (this passage and xxi. 32), these predictions occur in the second half of the book (xxxiv. 24, xxxvii. 24, and, in general, xl–xlviii). Here, the language implies that Ezekiel expects the future monarch to be taken from the Davidic house (verse 22); perhaps he is influenced by the prophetic expectations of Isaiah and Jeremiah; elsewhere he shrinks from a mere restoration of the old monarchy, or even from a monarchy at all (see notes on passages referred to). Stade, less probably, thinks that this passage refers to a non-Davidic monarchy.

22. Cf. verses 3 and 4. The high mountain (Jerusalem) is in strong contrast to verse 5.

23. fruit should probably be read as 'foliage.'

fowl: since 'the trees' in verse 24 must represent heathen nations, who are, as elsewhere, to behold the might and justice of Yahweh, the birds dwelling in the cedar's branches must be the subjects of the new monarchy, the 'strangers within the gates.'

of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish; I the LORD have spoken and have done it.

18 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

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xviii. After considering Zedekiah's individual responsibility for the fate which was to crush him, Ezekiel turns to a wider consideration of the question by which perhaps chap. xvii had been suggested to him, and which he now quotes (verse 2). After all, the calamity was falling on the whole nation; sinful as Judah had been before, she had remained a nation till now; why had she not been destroyed when Manasseh was filling the land with idolatry? Did not the exiles themselves belong to the generation which had carried through the reform of 621 B. C.? Obviously, to the exiles, the old Hebrew view had grown unsatisfactory. That view held that the moral personality which is the subject of reward and blame is not the individual, but the family or the race (Gen. vii. 1; Josh. vii. 24; 2 Sam. xxi; Ps. cix. 14; Matt. xxvii. 25; also Exod. xx. 5, and xxxiv. 6-8). This is implied in the justice or the customs of nearly all early societies, and as such is consecrated by religion and attributed to the will of God; but it is certain, sooner or later, to be recognized as involving the suffering of the innocent for the guilty. 'How is our suffering for the nation's past sins,' asked the exiles, 'to be reconciled with the justice of God?'

This drives Ezekiel back to the question of responsibility already discussed in chaps. iii and xiv; but he approaches it now from a different side—not from the point of view of the preacher who warns or the listener who is warned, but from that of the righteous and the sinner in general; he thus constructs a kind of 'catechism' of death and life. He lays down the principle boldly that there is no such thing as suffering for another's sins; Yahweh can do what he likes with his own; those who have not sinned he preserves alive; but this makes no difference to their children; each stands or falls to himself. In the face of this, how can Yahweh's justice be impugned? True repentance is always followed by reinstatement in Yahweh's grace; hence, the practical outcome is the necessity of moral reform. Cease to argue about God's justice; amend your ways, that you may receive His favour.

Five points should be here briefly noticed. (1) Ezekiel makes a distinct advance on Jeremiah, who seems (xxxi. 30; cf. Lam. v. 7) to accept the proverb for the present time. (2) Ezekiel's

What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the 2
land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith 3
the Lord GOD, ye shall not have *occasion* any more to use
this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the 4

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theory has all the one-sidedness of youth; the prophet is thinking out his way. Did he really hold that death always followed on sin, never on goodness? He hardly feels as a problem what Job and many of the Psalmists wrestle with in vain (cf. Pss. xxxvii, xlix, lxxiii); we cannot but wonder whether, had he been faced by the sufferings of Job, he would have held to this view as tenaciously as did Eliphaz and his friends. (3) Elsewhere, in connexion both with Israel and with the nations, the view of the nation as the moral personality is maintained (cf. xx. 4, xxi. 3); indeed, outside chaps. iii, xiv, xviii, and xxxiii, he seems to be almost uninfluenced by these newer speculations, and in chaps. xl–xlviii he shows no trace of them. (4) Here at last he shrinks from the thought of Yahweh as an impartial judge dealing out with even hand pain and reward. He has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, even when his sins have been such as to rouse our hate or contempt or loathing. 'Let him turn and live.' (5) Hence, Yahweh becomes a moral personality, instead of simply a mighty being, and thus infinitely superior to the gods of the heathen, at the very moment when his realm in Palestine is being destroyed; on this foundation alone can monotheism be securely founded, for it is the offspring, not of philosophy, but of the development of religious experience. See Introd., pp. 20, 21. The chapter is written with Ezekiel's characteristic fullness of expression; and many clauses are omitted in the LXX.

xviii. 1–4. *The text of the discourse:* the supremacy of Yahweh over every individual life.

2. this proverb: cf. note on xi. 3. Unripe grapes are often eaten in Syria, and the bad effect on the teeth follows very rapidly; all the more irrational is the delay of which the exiles complain.

4. all souls: Ezekiel thus in a breath denies the communal theory of morals; the father is neither more nor less important in God's sight than the son. Yahweh is hampered by no conventions or rules from dealing out death as he chooses—and he chooses to deal it out to the actual sinner; the emphasis in the last clause is to be laid on *it*, as the Hebrew makes clear. Obviously, the prophet is not here thinking of natural death; but since, in the O.T., death means the descent into Sheol, where

soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the
5 soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and
6 do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon
the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols
of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's
wife, neither hath come near to a woman in her separation;
7 and hath not wronged any, but hath restored to the debtor
his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his
bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a
8 garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither

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there is no communion with God, and since, in a period like Ezekiel's, death is so often associated with violence and misery, it comes naturally to be used for the loss of all that is worth having. The verse thus asserts two far-reaching propositions; the absolute supremacy of Yahweh, and the principle by which Yahweh exerts that supremacy. Cf. Job xxi. 19.

xviii. 5-8. *The conditions on which life is preserved.*

For this list of good and evil acts, cf. Ps. xv and Job xxxi. The list is made up almost entirely, like the decalogue, of prohibitions; it begins, like the decalogue, with purity of worship, advances to sexual purity, or those aspects of it which were most important to a Hebrew, and then to that spirit of humanity and kindliness for which the Hebrew codes are conspicuous. Kleinert (*Die Profeten in ihrer socialen Beziehung*) sees here, and in xxii. 7-12, the foundations of a new social order based on family life (itself the true source of religious observance) and civic rectitude; but Ezekiel's moral code is essentially conservative.

6. mountains. To eat on the mountains was at the least to join in the debased worship of Yahweh, which was no better than idolatry: see notes on vi. 2; cf. xxii. 7-12.

defiled: cf. Exod. xx. 14.

come near: cf. Lev. xviii. 10, xx. 18; not mentioned in the earliest legislation or in Deuteronomy.

7. For the restoration of the debtor's pledge, see Exod. xxii. 25; Deut. xxiv. 13; Lev. xix. 33, xxv. 14, 17; and Ezek. xxii. 7, 29, xlv. 8, xlvi. 18.

8. usury, interest: cf. Exod. xxii. 24; Deut. xxiii. 20; Lev. xxv. 26. Deuteronomy allows interest to be taken from a stranger. The code of Hammurabi assumes the giving and taking of interest in ordinary commercial transactions; such interest was about twenty per cent. in the second Babylonian Empire. The Hebrews

hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand
from iniquity, hath executed true judgement between man
and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my 9
judgements, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live,
saith the Lord GOD. If he beget a son that is a robber, 10
a shedder of blood, and that doeth any one of these things,
and that doeth not any of those *duties*, but even hath eaten 11
upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, hath 12
wronged the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence,
hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes
to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given 13
forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he
then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these
abominations: he shall surely die; his blood shall be
upon him. Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his 14
father's sins, which he hath done, and feareth, and doeth

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were not a commercial people (see note on xvi. 29, and the Hebrew legislators, like the framers of the Mediaeval Canon Law (cf. Ashley, *Economic History*, Bk. I. iii), were chiefly thinking of the advantages taken by the rich of the poor in their need, when interest becomes usury. Since Hebrews are brothers, nothing more than the money loaned must be asked for; 'increase' must not be 'taken.'

xviii. 10-13. *The corresponding conditions from which death will result.* The formal nature of the discourse is evident from the repetition of the sins as if they were all committed by the sinner.

10. any one of these things: the margin, 'that doeth to a brother any of these,' is the correct translation of the Hebrew text as it stands; the addition of a single letter would give that of the R. V. text. Toy and Kraetzschmar would omit the clause as a doublet of the first clause in verse 11, but in the formal style of this chapter it presents no great difficulty, if corrected.

xviii. 14-20. *The son does not die for his father's iniquity; the father dies for his own.* No new thought is here added; but Ezekiel feels it necessary to leave no loophole for ambiguity in his statement.

14. As Hezekiah had seen Ahaz's sins and Josiah Amon's and Manasseh's.

15 not such like, that hath not eaten upon the mountains,
neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of
16 Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath
wronged any, hath not taken aught to pledge, neither hath
spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the
17 hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, that
hath withdrawn his hand from the poor, that hath not
received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgements,
hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the
18 iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. As for his
father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by
violence, and did that which is not good among his people,
19 behold, he shall die in his iniquity. Yet say ye, Where-
fore doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?
When the son hath done that which is lawful and right,
and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he
20 shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die:
the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither
shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the
righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the
21 wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the

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18. his brother. The word is as little apposite here as in verse 10. It is omitted, as also in verse 10, by LXX. 'One might almost suspect that it is used as a sign of abbreviation like our "&c."' (Kraetzschmar).

19. Ezekiel here quotes the expression of the older view which he has been combating throughout the discourse. There were those who were surprised that the children's teeth were not set on edge. Their question is answered by a repetition of the principle—'it is only the sinners who die.'

20. bear the iniquity: cf. iv. 4, xiv. 10.

xviii. 21–29. The consequence of change from evil conduct to good or good conduct to evil. This marks a further step; as the parent cannot influence the fate of the child, so one part of life cannot influence another.

wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his 22 transgressions that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the 23 wicked? saith the Lord GOD: and not rather that he should return from his way, and live? But when the 24 righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? None of his righteous deeds that he hath done shall be remembered: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet 25 ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel: Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When the righteous man turneth away from his 26 righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth therein; in his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, 27 when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and

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23. Ezekiel's exposition has already led him to the possibility of conversion; now, as in verse 32 and xxxiii. 11, he reaches the level of the N. T.; yet, as in Job xvii. 25, we have here but a glimpse, which exerts little or no influence on the rest of the author's thought. In verse 24 Ezekiel is positive that if the sins of the wicked may be forgotten, so may be the good deeds of the righteous.

25. Ezekiel here quotes a second complaint; 'then God is inconstant.' Many passages in the O. T. might seem to bear out this inconstancy: e. g. Gen. vi. 7; Exod. xxii. 12, 14; Amos vii. 3; Joel ii. 13. But Ezekiel repudiates the suggestion as vigorously as does Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 29); it is not Yahweh that changes, but man. For this 'dialogue' between prophet and hearers, cf. Mal. i. 2, 7, &c.

26, 27: the two cases already referred to, in inverted order·

28 right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth,
and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath
29 committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet
saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not
equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are
30 not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O
house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the
Lord GOD. Return ye, and turn yourselves from all your
31 transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast
away from you all your transgressions, wherein ye have
transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit:
32 for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no
pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord
GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live.

19 Moreover, take thou up a lamentation for the princes

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in xxxiii. 13-20 the style is at once more epigrammatic and more regular, as if it were the outworking of what in this chapter is a sketch.

27. he shall save: the pronoun is emphatic: 'he and not I.'

xviii. 30-32. *The practical conclusion.*

30. Probably the margin should be read in the last clause; 'so shall they not be a stumblingblock of iniquity unto you.' The expression is then identical with that which occurs in vii. 19, xiv. 3.

31. Elsewhere, God gives men a new heart: xi. 19, xxxvi. 26: cf. Jer. iv. 3, xxiv. 7, xxxi. 33, and Phil. ii. 12. Here Ezekiel says no more than Isaiah (i. 17).

32. It is obvious that Ezekiel here passes by several considerations which would rise to our minds. He neglects the influences of heredity and environment, and of character. Children do suffer from their parents; a man's past does condition his present. The problem is not for us so simple as for Ezekiel. But it must be remembered, first, that Ezekiel is opposing a definite error, and second, that he does not actually deny such influences; his argument is simply, 'Where good is done, it cannot receive the punishment of evil'; and this is true. The statement that God may perform with reluctance a necessary judicial act shows the real audacity of Ezekiel's thought.

xix. *An Elegy over the Princes and over Judah.* This chapter forms a natural conclusion to the whole section (xii-xix). Nothing could

of Israel, and say, What was thy mother? A lioness: she 2

better illustrate the versatility of Ezekiel's style and thought than the sequence of the four chapters xvi–xix; fierce invective, picturesque and vigorously-worked-out simile, scholastic disquisition, and passionate lyric. If xviii reminds the reader of the Talmud, xix reminds him of the finest poetry in the Psalms. There is here no suggestion of the theology either of xviii or of xvi; for once the exiled Jew allows himself to express that grief over the fall of Zion, in spite of all her guilt, which is heard so poignantly in the outbursts of Jeremiah.

The chapter is written very carefully in poetic form; each verse has two limbs, and each limb two sections, the first of which has three accents, and the second two; the second limb is generally left unlinked to the first by any conjunction. This metrical scheme is known as the *Qinah* or 'elegy,' and the fact that accents and not syllables are numbered gives it the effect of English or German rather than of French or Greek poetry. The mournful cadence can easily be detected. Various suggestions as to the existence of rhyme or of metrical feet (numbered syllables) in Hebrew poetry have been made, but are at best doubtful, and demand a suspiciously large amount of textual alteration; see also C. A. and E. Briggs, *Psalms*, vol. i, pp. xxxviii–xlviii. In this chapter there are several omissions in the LXX which, if made in the Hebrew text, would make the Qinah metre more regular. Apart from this, the text is at best in disorder in many places.

xix. 1–9. *The elegy over the two princes, Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin.*

1. It is noteworthy that the prophet attributes this dirge equally with the 'riddle' of xvii, and the sermon of xviii, to the inspiration of Yahweh.

princes: LXX reads 'prince' (referring to Zedekiah), which would seem to be borne out by verse 2, 'thy mother.' Since more than one is referred to in the chapter, the singular might easily have been changed to the plural; Ezekiel never uses the word 'king' of the monarchs of Judah (see note on vii. 27 and xii. 10). The same word is also used by Hosea, but not regularly. Jeremiah has no scruples about using the more usual 'king.' Ezekiel's shrinking is best explained by the feeling that monarchy had been a violation of the theocracy: cf. 1 Sam. viii. 10–17.

2. The rhythm necessitates the removal of the pause between 'mother' and a 'lioness,' and we should then translate, 'How was thy mother a lioness!' but this is hardly English, or Hebrew either. Toy suggests 'was like'; the verse would then read,

Thy mother was like a lioness, Among lions:
She couched amid the young lions, She reared her whelps.

thy mother. This would naturally refer to Judah. Kraetz-

couched among lions, in the midst of the young lions she
3 nourished her whelps. And she brought up one of her
whelps; he became a young lion: and he learned to
4 catch the prey, he devoured men. The nations also
heard of him; he was taken in their pit: and they brought
5 him with hooks unto the land of Egypt. Now when she
saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she
took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion.
6 And he went up and down among the lions, he became
a young lion: and he learned to catch the prey, he

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schmar, however, suggests that the queen-mother, Hamutal, wife of Josiah, must be meant, since (1) the queen-mother was a person of great importance in the state (cf. Jer. xiii. 18; 2 Kings ii. 19, xxiv. 12); (2) Hamutal would seem to have been possessed of special influence (her son Jehoahaz came to the throne before his elder half-brother Jehoiakim; 2 Kings xxiii. 31, 36); (3) we can hardly explain otherwise the omission of Jehoiakim, the son of Zebidah; but, as Davidson points out, Jehoiakim died in peace, and so would not necessarily have a place in the elegy at all. Other reasons given are unconvincing; and verses 10–13 would not only, to us, be tasteless if applied to a queen-mother, but also unparalleled in Hebrew literature.

3. one of her whelps: Jehoahaz, who reigned three months (2 Kings xxiii. 32), and was then carried prisoner into Egypt, 608 B. C. Observe that a new era is begun by the death of Josiah himself, who is not mentioned here.

5. she saw that she had waited. This makes poor sense; LXX reads 'that he had been driven from her.' None of the suggestions are satisfactory—'was sick,' 'was sore entreated,' or '(her hope) was fallen to the ground.'

another of her whelps—Jehoiachin; for the passing over of Jehoiakim, see note on verse 2. Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years (608—597 B. C.). Jehoiachin's reign lasted three months it was in his captivity that Ezekiel himself was deported (see Introd., p. 13). If the 'mother' were Hamutal, there would be as little reason for mentioning the son as the father; and Kraetzschmar takes verse 5 to refer to Zedekiah; but (unless we alter the position of this chapter) Zedekiah is still on the throne; nor has Ezekiel sufficient respect for him to make so long a reference to him as this.

6. Cf. verse 3; the descriptions, as in verse 7, are conventional; neither king could be much more than a *roi-fainéant*.

devoured men. And he knew their palaces, and laid 7
waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, because of the noise of his roaring. Then 8
the nations set against him on every side from the provinces: and they spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit. And they put him in a cage with hooks, 9
and brought him to the king of Babylon; they brought him into strong holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

Thy mother was like a vine, in thy blood, planted by 10
the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters. And she had strong rods for the sceptres 11

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7. palaces. The Hebrew text (so R.V. margin) reads 'widows': which with a slight change, or, if we may trust the analogy of the corresponding Assyrian word (Delitzsch), no change at all, becomes 'palaces,' which preserves the parallel to 'cities'; in any case the image is not kept up. Another easy alteration would give us 'dwelling-places' instead of 'palaces.' For 'knew' some word meaning 'ravaged' seems probable.

8. set is left without object in the Hebrew; probably either 'voice' or 'snare' should be supplied.

9. cage. The word is probably borrowed from Assyrian. Assurbanipal refers to a cage placed at the east gate of Nineveh in which he kept an Arabian monarch imprisoned. Compare the stories of Tamerlane. Hooks were actually used for dragging captives away. The metre requires some alteration in the text; the second 'they brought him' should in any case be omitted. For 'the mountains of Israel' see note on vi. 2. These two princes may be said to have deserved this lament, if not by their deeds, by the tragedy of their fate.

xix. 10–14. *The elegy over Judah.* The figure of the vine (chaps. xv, xvii) is resumed; a fresh reason against identifying the 'mother' with Hamutal.

10. Thy mother, Cf. verse 2.

in thy blood. The text must be wrong here; LXX has 'on a pomegranate,' which suggests the reading 'in a vineyard'; but how would so simple a reading come to be altered? Other conjectures are easy and unconvincing.

many waters. Cf. xvii. 5.

11. The LXX here reads 'a rod' and 'a sceptre.'

of them that bare rule, and their stature was exalted among the thick boughs, and they were seen in their
12 height with the multitude of their branches. But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were
13 broken off and withered; the fire consumed them. And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty
14 land. And fire is gone out of the rods of her branches, it hath devoured her fruit, so that there is in her no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

20 And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth

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them that bare rule may express the power of Israel in earlier times (Davidson), or simply carry on the hyperbole of verses 3 and 7.

12, 13. These verses can refer as easily to the condition of Judah before as after the final agony. 'A dry and thirsty land' is metaphorical, and does not refer to Babylon. All that was best in Jerusalem had been removed when Ezekiel himself was deported. See Introd., pp. 12 ff.

14. out of the rods: or, as LXX and R.V. margin, 'a rod.' This verse must be resumptive, since in verse 12 neither rods nor fruit are left. The cause of the city's ruin is the folly of her princes; their short reigns had at least shown no promise of statesmanship or piety: see 2 Kings xxiii. 32, xxiv. 9.

and shall be: literally 'and it has become.' This note is not necessarily a part of the original composition, which would hardly be a popular dirge before the actual fall of Jerusalem.

Section V. Third Cycle of Threats (xx–xxiv).

This section is dated a year later than that which begins in chap. viii. It is the last section before the fall of the city, and the prophecies are all uttered within three years before the fatal day. The prophet's judicial calmness and his strong excitement are equally remarkable. The section begins with a second lengthy arraignment of the nation (chap. xx), in which no figure is used; but the one motive, both of delay, of punishment, and of restoration, is Yahweh's care for his name, lest it should be profaned. This is followed by an obscure fragment of prophecy against 'the

month, the tenth *day* of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat

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forest of the South,' which in its turn prepares the way for a long and involved rhapsody of imminent slaughter—the Sword Song (chap. xxi), in which the picture of the ruin of Israel is placed beside that of Ammon's destruction, as Nebuchadnezzar advances westward. The prophet then passes to a third arraignment of Judah (chap. xxii), in which he adopts the tone of a passionate accuser, and includes in his picture of resolute guilt each class in the community. As if this were not enough to justify the desolation of the city, he resumes (in chap. xxiii) the figure of chap. xvi, and describes the guilt both of Samaria and of Judah, but he mingles figure and reality in such a manner that the national sin appears even more repulsive and loathsome. All the prophet's bitterness, indignation, and contempt are concentrated in the unsparing and terrible realism of this chapter. The last prophecy is uttered on the day when the siege begins. In a mood of fierce irony Ezekiel recalls the caldron image he had previously quoted and startlingly reapplied, and now gives it a further application; he then learns that he is to lose his wife. She dies the same day, and in the necessity laid on him to show no outward sign of grief he sees the prediction of the utter paralysis of despair that will fall on the inhabitants of Jerusalem when the crash comes. When it has come he will be free to speak once more.

These passages throw a still more interesting light on the personality of Ezekiel, and on the meaning of prophecy. As the calamity approaches, his own consciousness of it deepens. Now he stifles his excitement; now he is mastered by it; now it fires his more judicial utterances with a strange passion; now he shrinks before the disaster; and again he triumphs at the thought of its finality. But for the time it paralyses his deeper powers of thought. This section makes no advance either in the interpretation of God's purpose in restoration (except in xx. 40–42, which is the fullest announcement of restoration in the first half of the book), or in the philosophy of responsibility. It is as if the prophet thinks less and sees and feels more. The description of the Babylonian king at the cross-roads is startling in its vividness (chap. xxi); the final calamity, however long foreseen, is appallingly sudden (chap. xxiv); and no such indictment against a whole people as that in chap. xxiii has ever been uttered before or since.

Chap. xx falls into four divisions—verses 1–26, a retrospect of the nation's sin in Egypt (5–9) and in the first generation (10–17) and the second generation (18–26) in the wilderness; verses 27–32, a rapid review of the idolatry in Palestine; verses 33–44,

2 before me. And the word of the LORD came unto me,
3 saying, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel,
and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Are ye
come to inquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I
4 will not be inquired of by you. Wilt thou judge them,
son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know

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the restoration to purity (33-42) and self-loathing (43-44); the remainder of the chapter has no special connexion with what has preceded it. The arraignment, as a whole, stands midway between chaps. xvi and xxiii. In chap. xvi the figure was preserved, with more or less completeness, throughout; here no figure is used at all; the prophet will not run the risk of failing to be perfectly explicit. Hence periods of Israel's history, there passed over lightly, are here emphasized. We find the actual idolatry of the people traced back to the Egyptian bondage (verse 8), and the main attention is concentrated on the sins in the wilderness instead of on the foreign alliances later on (cf. Ps. cvi, Acts vii). Further, the order in chap. xvi is—the original kindness of Yahweh, the long ingratitude of Israel, and the final punishment; here the attitude of Yahweh—not at the beginning and the end only, but at every stage in the history—is emphasized (verses 8, 13, 21, 29). The language shows special affinity with the Priestly narrative and code, and more particularly with Lev. xvii-xxvi; while the style recalls the ample discourses of Deuteronomy. Smend and Kraetzschmar have urged that the promise of verses 40-44 implies that the fall of Jerusalem had already taken place; but in any case the doom is virtually accomplished; what he says here he has partly said already (cf. vi. 9, xvi. 60); his thoughts now begin to travel beyond the moment of crisis. The earlier part of the chapter is as formal in its style as chap. xviii.

xx. 1-4. *Introduction.*

1. In August, 590 B. C. For the elders' visits, cf. viii. 1, xiv. 1.

3. The elders come with an inquiry on some particular point; they receive a general discourse on the sins of the past. In chaps. viii and xiv no such inquiry is mentioned, but in chap. xiv it is implied: and the expectation of an answer, there as here, was disappointed. Cf. Matt. xii. 39, xxiv. 3, 4.

4. Wilt thou judge them? The phrase, repeated in xxii. 2 and xxiii. 36, is characteristic of this section. Elsewhere, Yahweh forbids Ezekiel's natural commiseration of his people (xi. 13). This judgement consists in recapitulating the sins of the past, as did Stephen when arraigned before the Sanhedrin (Acts vii).

the abominations of their fathers; and say unto them, 5
Thus saith the Lord GOD: In the day when I chose Israel,
and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of
Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of
Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am
the LORD your God; in that day I lifted up mine hand 6
unto them, to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt
into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk
and honey, which is the glory of all lands: and I said 7
unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of
his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt;

Note that all this implies the corporate national responsibility which chap. xviii seemed to set aside.

xx. 5–9. *The iniquities in Egypt.*

5. chose. This idea of selection is common in Deuteronomy, but occurs only here in Ezekiel. The expression implies that previously to this there was no special relation between Yahweh and Israel: cf. xvi. 3. The patriarchs are unmentioned save for the reference in xxxiii. 24. The purpose underlying Yahweh's choice is the same as that expressed in Amos iii. 2 (where 'known' is used for 'chosen').

lifted up mine hand, in oath or covenant. The similar phrase in xvi. 27 has the opposite meaning of punishment: cf. verses 22, 23.

made myself known—through Moses: cf. Exod. iii. 6 ff.

6. day: to be taken, as often, for 'period.'

milk and honey. Cf. Exod. iii. 8: for 'glory,' cf. verse 15; Exod. xiv. 15; Jer. iii. 19.

7. This command, and the occasion for it, are unmentioned in any of the narratives of Israel's sojourn in Egypt. That Semitic nomads settling temporarily in Egypt would join Egyptian religious practices to their own is not impossible; the newly discovered temple of Serabit at Sinai shows how Semitic and Egyptian worships could exist together[1]; but Ezekiel's thought is more probably that wherever Israel came into contact with heathenism she would be corrupted by it. It is noteworthy that the characteristic beliefs of Egypt have left no trace on Israelite thought. Chap. xvi. 26 refers only to later political alliances (see note ad loc.).

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[1] See Petrie and Currelly, *Researches in Sinai*; cf. also note on p. 16.

8 I am the LORD your God. But they rebelled against me
and would not hearken unto me; they did not every man
cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they
forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said I would pour out
my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them
9 in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for
my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight
of the nations, among whom they were, in whose sight I
made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out
10 of the land of Egypt. So I caused them to go forth out
of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilder-
11 ness. And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them
my judgements, which if a man do, he shall live in them.
12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign

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8. In the early narratives the rebelliousness which rouses Yahweh's desire to accomplish his anger against Israel only rises in the desert (Exod. xxxii. 9).

then I said: these words occur like a refrain through the chapter: in each case Yahweh's purpose is altered, lest his name should be 'profaned' among the nations. Cf. Ps. cvi. 8. See Introd., p. 36.

xx. 10–17. *The First Generation in the Wilderness.*

10. Ezekiel here makes no reference to the Red Sea; his thought of God's wrath and Israel's disobedience obscures what was to the Hebrew God's crowning mercy.

11. The legislation of Sinai. 'Statutes' and 'Judgements' are characteristic words in Deuteromony: cf. also Lev. xviii. 5 (quoted in Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12). The result of obedience to the law is uniformly represented as life: cf. Deut. iv. 40 and xxxi. 14–21; also Exod. xx. 12. This promise would most naturally apply to the laws of the Book of the Covenant, Exod. xxi. 1—xxiii. 19, which contain the foundations of all stable social life; but the principle includes all the legislation, moral and ritual, as it develops. It is doubtful whether any of the O. T. legislation, in the form in which we now possess it, actually dates from the wilderness.

12. sabbaths: cf. Exod. xx. 8. In earlier times the Sabbath appears as a day of rest (2 Kings iv. 23) and an opportunity, like the 'new moon' (1 Sam. xx. 5), for feasting and even licentiousness

between me and them, that they might know that I am
the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel 13
rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not
in my statutes, and they rejected my judgements, which
if a man do, he shall live in them; and my sabbaths they
greatly profaned: then I said I would pour out my fury
upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I 14
wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned
in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I brought them

(Hos. ii. 11; Isa. i. 13; cf. Amos viii. 5; also 2 Kings xi. 5 ff.). It has often been compared to the Babylonian institution of the 'šabattu' or 'nubattum'; these, however, were days of abstinence rather than merely of rest (*dies nefasti*), and seem to have occurred every seventh day after the new moon rather than simply to have marked the week. The nineteenth day of the month was also a 'Sabbath' in Babylon; and there is evidence that a five-day week ran through the Babylonian year. (It is noticeable that a distinctly small proportion of Babylonian business documents are signed on the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth of the month in Hammurabi's time, and also later.) There is little evidence for the modern view that the Sabbath was an institution taken over from Babylonia. Originally perhaps an institution common to the Semitic peoples, it had come to be profaned or misused in Israel, like other sacred things (verse 13). Hence, both immediately before and after the exile, the necessity for upholding its sanctity (Jer. xvii; Isa. lviii; Neh. xiii); the importance of the Sabbath as a religious institution would naturally be increased in the exile, since its observance was not necessarily confined to Palestine. In the Priestly legislation, the mention of the Sabbath is almost confined to Lev. xvii–xxvi, where the highest importance is assigned to it. It is not referred to in Genesis, nor in Ezra, nor in Psalms, Proverbs, nor Job. In N. T. times its due observance stood in the forefront of all obedience to the law.

13. profaned. The only mention of the Sabbath in the earliest legislation is in the Decalogue—the simple prohibition of all work. This would sufficiently mark the Sabbath off from ordinary days; profanation consisted in treating the special like the ordinary. Cf. xxii. 26.

14. For this interest of the nations in Israel, cf. verse 22; Exod. xxxii. 12; Deut. xxix. 22–29.

15 out. Moreover also I lifted up my hand unto them in
the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land
which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey,
16 which is the glory of all lands; because they rejected my
judgements, and walked not in my statutes, and profaned
my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.
17 Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying
them, neither did I make a full end of them in the
18 wilderness. And I said unto their children in the wilder-
ness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither
observe their judgements, nor defile yourselves with their
19 idols: I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes,
20 and keep my judgements, and do them: and hallow my
sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you,
21 that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. But
the children rebelled against me; they walked not in my
statutes, neither kept my judgements to do them, which
if a man do, he shall live in them; they profaned my
sabbaths: then I said I would pour out my fury upon
them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilder-
22 ness. Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought
for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the

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xx. 18-26. *The Second Generation in the Wilderness.*

18. Their idols: cf. verses 7, 8, 24. In Deuteronomy the warnings are rather against the idolatry of Israel's present and future environment—Midian and Moab, Beth-Peor and Canaan. Exod. xxxii. 1 also implies novelty.

20. a sign: Ezekiel here recognizes the value of the Sabbath as a constantly recurring reminder of Yahweh's relation to his people: cf. Gen. ix. 17.

22. I withdrew mine hand: contrast verse 23. The tense employed suggests that this leniency was continuous. 'I kept my hand withdrawn, and yet I wrought . . . and I, even I (the pronoun is emphatic) lifted up my hand as a token that I swore to scatter them.' The clause 'I withdrew,' &c., however, is not found in the LXX.

sight of the nations, in whose sight I brought them forth.
Moreover I lifted up mine hand unto them in the wilder- 23
ness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and
disperse them through the countries; because they had 24
not executed my judgements, but had rejected my statutes,
and had profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were after
their fathers' idols. Moreover also I gave them statutes 25
that were not good, and judgements wherein they should
not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that 26
they caused to pass through *the fire* all that openeth the

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23. that I would scatter them. This implies that the exile was a punishment for the sins committed in the wilderness, or rather for the evil disposition which manifested itself even at that early stage of Israel's history. But the sins of the wilderness had not to wait for their punishment till those distant generations.

25. statutes that were not good. This striking expression must not be explained away; it is after all only in accordance with the general Hebrew view that God is the author alike of good and evil (Amos iii. 6; Job ii. 10), and that He can therefore even deceive men (see note on xiv. 9). Hence, since Israel has obviously been carrying out statutes that are not good, they must have been really given by Yahweh, but as a punishment, a judicially inflicted blindness. Viewed in this way, the thought is an application to history of the doom of Isa. vi. 10: cf. Ps. xviii. 26. There could be no clearer instance of the principle 'peccatum poena peccati.' In spite of James i. 13, the Biblical writers are convinced that there is a system of action and reaction between man's choice and God's treatment: cf. Acts vii. 42. Sin causes a hopeless blurring of the distinction between right and wrong; this result, both prophets and apostles assert, is not only allowed, but sent by God. It is needless, for any one who accepts the Theistic position, to discuss which term is more correct. By the grace of God, as Ezekiel saw, the new heart is given, from the possession of which flows an entirely different set of consequences: cf. Rom. v. 20. It is noteworthy that Jeremiah (vii. 31, xix. 5) takes the simpler view of these 'statutes,' i. e., that obedience to them had nothing to do with Yahweh. Cf. chap. xxiii. 39; also Acts vii. 42.

26. Cf. Exod. xiii. 2: 'Sanctify unto me all the firstborn; whatsoever openeth the womb . . . it is mine.' In Num. viii. 16, the Levites, as devoted to Yahweh, are the substitutes for all the firstborn (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 20). The practice of child sacrifice is

womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.

27 Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: In this moreover have your fathers blasphemed me, in that they

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always reprobated in the O. T. in terms of horror, nor is it ever spoken of elsewhere as a penalty (see note on xvi. 20). It certainly existed, however, in the surrounding nations, and in Israel (cf. 2 Kings iii. 27, xvi. 3, xvii. 17, xxi. 6, xxiii. 10). On the site of Gezer, 'all round the feet of the columns and over the whole area of the High Place, the earth was discovered to be a regular cemetery, in which the skeletons of young children were buried . . . two at least of the skeletons showed marks of fire' (Macalister, *Biblical Side-lights from the Mound of Gezer*). Wherever the Phoenicians went there was child sacrifice. After the battle of Himera, 480 B. C., Gelo required the defeated Carthaginians no longer to sacrifice children to Baal (see Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 39); but the practice was not put down in Carthage till the time of Tiberius. As for Israel, Tophet, the valley of the sons of Hinnom, was the cultus place for burning children to Molech, the Canaanite God. Cf. Isa. xxx. 33 (where 'the king' should probably be read 'Molech'). Ezek. xxiii. 29 shows that there was no rivalry between the worship of Yahweh and that of the idols in the minds of the people.

Frazer (*Golden Bough*, ii. 38) deduces the origin of the Passover from a Semitic custom of sacrificing the firstborn. Wellhausen (*Proleg.* p. 90) and W. Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 465) doubt this. The real order of development of thought appears to be (1) all of the firstborn belong to God, but they are only to be actually offered to Him in special cases; Gen. xxii and Exod. xxii. 28 seem to suggest this; (2) representative offerings to God replace all firstborn males; (3) a literal interpretation of the command, under the influence of surrounding heathenism, is made in times of stress, and (Ezek. xx. 16) as a result of penal error. That all the firstborn were ever offered seems inconceivable. Clearly this was not the case in Moab (2 Kings iii. 37); but the fact that the children's skeletons at Gezer mostly belong to infants under a week old certainly suggests it.

xx. 27-32. *Israel's wickedness in Palestine.* The prophet's tone now grows warmer as he turns upon his hearers, seeing in them the representatives of the disobedient nation.

27. This verse belongs to both sections, but it appears to point forwards; and so the Revisers understand it.

have committed a trespass against me. For when I had 28
brought them into the land, which I lifted up mine hand
to give unto them, then they saw every high hill, and
every thick tree, and they offered there their sacrifices,
and there they presented the provocation of their offering,
there also they made their sweet savour, and they poured
out there their drink offerings. Then I said unto them, 29
What meaneth the high place whereunto ye go? So the
name thereof is called Bamah unto this day. Wherefore 30
say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Do
ye pollute yourselves after the manner of your fathers?
and go ye a whoring after their abominations? and 31
when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass
through the fire, do ye pollute yourselves with all your
idols, unto this day? and shall I be inquired of by you,
O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will
not be inquired of by you: and that which cometh into 32
your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say, We will be
as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve

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28. provocation: cf. Isa. i. 13, 14.

offering: the word here used is *Korban*, which occurs elsewhere only in Leviticus and Numbers, and in Mark vii. 11.

29. Ezekiel here suggests a word-play on the word for altar (*bamah*) as if it were derived from the root *bo*, 'to go' (perhaps, as Ewald suggests, in an impure sense). Philologically, the word has no certain congeners in Hebrew. It appears also in the Moabite inscription of Mesha.

30. Idolatry always seems to call forth this bitter irony from Ezekiel as from Isaiah. Cf. verse 34. What these idols were like may be conjectured from an image of the two-horned Astarte found at Gezer, and many roughly-executed clay images of cows. Cf. 1 Kings xii. 32.

31. pollute yourselves: cf. verse 26. The meaning of the word is similar to that of 'profane,' but is less technical; idolatry is like dirt, and makes a man actually filthy. The word is very common in Leviticus, where it is specifically used of the pollution of leprosy.

32. We will be as the nations. This assimilation was both

33 wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely
with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and
34 with fury poured out, will I be king over you: and I will
bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of
the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand,
and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out:
35 and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and
36 there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded
with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt,
37 so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will
cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into

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unconscious (Judges i. 27–36 shows how permeating would be the Canaanite influence) and conscious (in the case of the political and religious alliances).

xx. 33–47. *The restoration to purity.*

33. a mighty hand, and a . . . stretched out arm. This phrase occurs several times in Deuteronomy (iv. 34, v. 15, &c.) for God's strength displayed in deliverance; here Ezekiel, with characteristic unexpectedness, joins it to 'fury poured out' (cf. verse 8) to denote Yahweh's wrath with the people whom he must still further punish before he can deliver them. And yet, as the phrase suggests, it is the heathen who will really suffer.

will I be king. Perhaps there is a play here on 'king' (*melek*) and Molech, or Melek, in whose honour the children were sacrificed (verses 26, 31).

35. wilderness of the peoples. The desert which stretched between Syria and Babylon; this desert will witness Yahweh's victorious argument with his people, as that of Sinai witnessed his argument with their fathers. Round this desert lie 'the peoples,' Babylon, Assyria, Syria, &c.; and they are to be there alone with Yahweh, 'face to face.' Cf. Hos. ii. 3, 14. See Map.

plead, in the forensic sense, as often in Isaiah (cf. G. A. Smith, *Book of Isaiah*, vol. i. pp. 6 ff.).

37. cause you to pass: not as the children were caused to pass through the fire, verses 26, 31.

under the rod: the figure is that of a shepherd numbering his flock and perhaps separating the sheep from the goats (cf. verse 38, and Matt. xxv. 32); the rod naturally becomes the yoke of the covenant, God's mercy and man's duty. LXX omits the

the bond of the covenant; and I will purge out from 38
among you the rebels, and them that transgress against
me; I will bring them forth out of the land where they
sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel:
and ye shall know that I am the LORD. As for you, O 39
house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD: Go ye, serve
every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not
hearken unto me: but my holy name shall ye no more
profane with your gifts, and with your idols. For in mine 40
holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel,
saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all
of them, serve me in the land: there will I accept them,
and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of
your oblations, with all your holy things. As a sweet 41
savour will I accept you, when I bring you out from the
peoples, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye
have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you in
the sight of the nations. And ye shall know that I am 42

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reference to the covenant, and reads 'by number,' carrying on the figure of the shepherd; cf. Milton, *l'Allegro*:

> And every shepherd tells his tale
> Under the hawthorn in the dale.

38. The rebellious will be brought out of Babylon only to perish in the wilderness, like the rebellious generation who came out of Egypt.

39. Further irony. The particle translated 'if' is really a sign of asseveration. 'Serve your idols, then; but afterwards you will certainly listen to me.'

40. Note the quick transition from verse 39 to 40; which, however, is the less difficult since the old bad worship was really directed to Yahweh, but in a wrong way and at a wrong time.

mine holy mountain. Ezekiel does not elsewhere use this phrase: cf. Isa. lvi. 7.

require your offerings: much stronger than 'accept' above. Cf. Mic. vi. 8.

41. sanctified: the opposite to the profanation of verses 9, 14, &c.

the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel,
into the country which I lifted up mine hand to give unto
43 your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways,
and all your doings, wherein ye have polluted yourselves;
and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all
44 your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know
that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for
my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor
according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel,
saith the Lord GOD.

45, 46 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son
of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop *thy word*
toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the

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xx. 43-44. *Restoration through self-loathing.* Cf. xxxvi. 16-38: 'for my sake, not yours' (verse 22), 'be ashamed of your evil ways' (verse 32). But there Ezekiel passes straight on to the 'heart of flesh.' The distance between the two prophecies is enough to defend the place of this present passage among the pre-exilic discourses. The tone of these verses is very different from the glorious anticipation of Isa. xl-lvi; but it is a truer prediction when we remember the dismal circumstances of the return: cf. Ezra iii. 12; Neh. viii. 9. See note on xvi. 6.

xx. 45-49. *The destruction of the Forest of the South.* In the Hebrew these verses commence the following chapter, and they would seem to date from the time of the composition of that chapter. With chap. xx, both in style and subject-matter, they are quite unconnected. The division of chapters in LXX is the same as that in the English versions.

46. the South. Three words are here used for 'South.' The first, 'Teman,' is a general name for Edom; 'Darom' is the light or sunny region, used in Job xxxvii. 17 of the south wind; the third, 'Negeb,' was the usual term for the hill-country south of Judah, from Beer-sheba to Kadesh barnea. Ezekiel is now, in imagination, inside Jerusalem, whither the army of Nebuchadnezzar is steadily drawing nearer.

drop *thy word*: cf. Amos vii. 16, Mic. ii. 6-11, where the phrase is used in a contemptuous or slighting sense; but not so here, or in xxi. 2.

forest of the field: this denotes no more than the trees

field in the South; and say to the forest of the South, 47
Hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD:
Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour
every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming
flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south
to the north shall be burnt thereby. And all flesh shall 48
see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be
quenched. Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, 49
Is he not a speaker of parables?

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son **21**

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scattered over the open countryside. There were no 'forests' in the south, as in Gilead and the hilly country on the east of Jordan, though trees were probably once less sparse than now. (See G. A. Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 80, 148, 522). Much of the territory of Judah was physically indistinguishable from the Negeb. This 'south country', along with Ammon, is Nebuchadnezzar's objective.

47. The green and the dry correspond to the righteous and the wicked (cf. xxi. 3), in spite of the contention of chap. xviii. 'Flaming flame' precisely represents Ezekiel's tautological expression.

48. An indirect piece of evidence that Ezekiel spoke his prophecies and did not simply write them. The reference is to verses 46–48, and the listeners suggest that the prophet's words are only pictures—not realities; cf. xxxiii. 31–33, also iv. 14, ix. 8, xi. 13.

xxi. *The Song of the Sword.* At the close of the reasoned and formal exposition of the nation's sin in chap. xx the prophet burst into a fragment of prophetic denunciation (xx. 45). The impulse, instead of spending itself, now gains a stronger hold on him, and forces him into a state of wild excitement, reminding the reader of chap. vii, but going far beyond that chapter in lyrical intensity, in proportion to the greater nearness of the end. The chapter falls into five loosely connected sections, of which the third and fourth may be taken as interludes in the development of the main subject. In the first section the prophet's frenzy is still partly under control; but the flame of which he prophesied in xx. 47 now concentrates itself into the vision of a drawn sword, which is stretched out over the land from south to north (cf. xx. 47), and the repeated cries of 'It is coming' (cf. 'an end!' in chap. vii) mark the rising tide of excitement.

In the second strophe (verses 8–17) it would seem as if the prophet had seized a sword and was brandishing it wildly; the

of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop *thy word*
toward the sanctuaries, and prophesy against the land of
3 Israel; and say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD:
Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword
out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous
4 and the wicked. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee

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sentences spring from his lips in wild irregular jerks, as the sword flashes to and fro and burns its way, so to speak, into the prophet's imagination. Suddenly, in the third strophe (verses 18–23), there is a moment's calm; the vision of the sword is succeeded by a more detailed vision of Nebuchadnezzar, arrested in his advance westward by uncertainty as to whether Jerusalem or Ammon shall be first attacked. The prophet sees his acts of divination with the keen sight of a clairvoyant. Before the act is complete, however, the thought of Jerusalem and its sin turns his mind elsewhere, and in the fourth strophe (verses 24–27), with words that are still calm, yet obscure and irregular, he returns to the coming disaster, now seen not simply as disaster but retribution. Then (verses 28–32) the thought of Ammon re-enters his mind; snatching the sword again, and repeating phrases already used in another connexion, he turns upon Ammon the stream of his denunciation until, as he sheathes his sword, his speech grows more intelligible, and the frenzy dies away.

Such is the most natural explanation of the chapter. To make it yield coherent sense throughout, like chap. xx, is impossible. One is reminded of Virgil's description of the Cumaean Sybil (*Aen.* vi. 100 'obscuris vera involvens,' &c.). It is not surprising that the breathless transitions of thought have puzzled the copyists, and that the text is in places incurably corrupt. Such a frenzy would have been impossible for Isaiah or Jeremiah, but intelligible in a mind like Ezekiel's, capable of passing from scholastic reasoning to trance, from the logical to the dithyrambic.

xxi. 1–7. *The drawing of the sword.*

2. the sanctuaries: as the reading of LXX suggests, this is probably a mistake for 'her sanctuaries.' R. G. Moulton has suggested that at this point Ezekiel actually draws a sword.

3. the righteous and the wicked: here, as in xx. 47, Ezekiel overlooks the whole argument of chap. xviii; but he is certainly more true to the facts of the case than his desire for clearness allowed him to be then: cf. Luke xiii. 4. The passage shows conclusively that there has been no very careful editing: cf. note on xxix. 17.

the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of its sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD 5 have drawn forth my sword out of its sheath; it shall not return any more. Sigh therefore, thou son of man; with 6 the breaking of thy loins and with bitterness shalt thou sigh before their eyes. And it shall be, when they say 7 unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt say, Because of the tidings, for it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and it shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 8, 9 of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD: Say, A sword, a sword, it is sharpened, and also furbished: it is 10 sharpened that it may make a slaughter; it is furbished that it may be as lightning: shall we then make mirth?

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4. Ezekiel here sees the destruction as ranging over the entire world; the terror of the vision is both intensive and extensive.

6. sigh: cf. xi. 13, xxiv. 16. There is no real contradiction; here the coming desolation calls forth a convulsive shudder from the prophet, the reason of which he then explains to those who are watching him. Cf. verse 12.

7. Cf. vii. 17.

xxi. 8-16. *The sharpening of the sword.* The growth of the prophet's agitation is shown by the constant repetitions: cf. vii. 1-6. The whole section falls into four strophes: verses 8-11, 12-13, 14-15^{a}, 15^{b}-17.

10. that it may be: cf. verse 28; the Hebrew word translated 'furbished' is probably identical with 'pointed,' in verse 15; Cornill suggests simply 'that it may shine.'

The second part of the verse is extremely difficult. If the Hebrew text (literally translated in R. V.) is retained, the reference must be to the ignorant carelessness of those who were jesting while their destruction was on its way to them; for which we may perhaps compare the situation hinted at in xi. 3; but the expression seems unnatural. Smend and Kraetzschmar by a slight change read 'woe to the prince' (or 'princes')

11 the rod of my son, it contemneth every tree. And it is
given to be furbished, that it may be handled: the sword,
it is sharpened, yea, it is furbished, to give it into the hand
12 of the slayer. Cry and howl, son of man: for it is upon
my people, it is upon all the princes of Israel: they are
delivered over to the sword with my people: smite
13 therefore upon thy thigh. For there is a trial; and what
if even the rod that contemneth shall be no more? saith

(cf. verse 12). The last clause would appear to mean that the rulers of Israel despise every force that can come against them; 'rod' and (to carry on the metaphor) 'tree' standing for authority or national power. This is in harmony with the preceding clause; the margin has the Hebrew against it; in any case 'my son' is strange in such a context as this; but compare 'my people' in verse 12. Davidson explains the words as meaning 'the rod which chastises my son (i. e. Babylon) despises (is more terrible than) every other power.' The LXX has a string of imperatives: 'slay, despise, set at nought, every tree!' Smend suggests 'thou hast despised the rod, and loathed every tree'; Kraetzschmar, 'that (i. e. the people that) despises me and serves each tree' (referring to the idolatry denounced in xx. 28). It is as easy to make suggestions as it is difficult to be sure they represent the original text; but we can hardly be wrong in comparing verse 13, where 'rod' appears to refer to Judah in her pride rather than to Babylon. If we keep to the Hebrew text, we must suppose that, along with the terror of the sword, the prophet sees the fatal and defiant foolhardiness of Judah at the time of Zedekiah's last revolt.

11. The Hebrew has 'and it (or 'he') will give.' The correction of the R. V. is necessary, or the first person singular must be read. The vagueness of the last clause heightens the weirdness and mystery of the whole.

12. Contrast verse 6. In Jer. xxxi. 19, smiting on the thigh is a sign of dejection and shame; here the following verse shows the sense to be different.

13. As obscure as verse 10. As they stand, the words appear to mean 'such pretensions as those of Judah will not go untested; how if their arrogant power is really flung to the ground?' or, as margin, supplying 'the sword,' 'how if the coming ruin laughs even at them? they will be no more.' But in view of verse 10 it seems better to keep the phrase 'the rod that contemneth.' It would be tempting to read, with Bertholet and Kraetzschmar, a word for 'wrath' or 'among them' in place of 'trial' ('in wrath will I,

the Lord GOD. Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, 14
and smite thine hands together; and let the sword be
doubled the third time, the sword of the deadly wounded:
it is the sword of the great one that is deadly wounded,
which entereth into their chambers. I have set the point 15
of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may
melt, and their stumblings be multiplied: ah! it is made
as lightning, it is pointed for slaughter. Gather thee 16
together, go to the right; set thyself in array, go to the

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even I, despise them') ; but here also conjectures are too easy to be valuable.

14. smite thine hands together, in wrath, as summoning destruction upon them : cf. verse 17. In xxv. 6 the phrase is used of Ammon's exultation over Judah's misery : see also vi. 11, and xxii. 13.

doubled the third time. The prophet has dropped the sword in verse 13, now he snatches it again, and twice brandishes it (backwards and forwards) three times over. (R. G. Moulton points out that where action accompanies song the words may naturally be unintelligible alone.) It would be simpler to point the consonants of the text, with Kraetzschmar, so as to read 'let the sword be doubled and trebled,' i. e. brandished about.

the deadly wounded. The phrase is taken up again in verses 25 (also of Zedekiah) and 29. This reference to Zedekiah bears out the interpretation of 'the rod that contemneth' (verse 13).

entereth into their chambers : better, as margin, 'he compasseth them about' ; the ruin is all round them, as in the terrible days of the siege.

15. the point. The reference is still to the siege. The word is obscure ; the translation of the margin, 'consternation,' is borne out by the Arabic ; Delitzsch formerly suggested that it is akin to the Assyrian word for 'slaughter,' but the identification is now given up ; probably a textual error for 'slaughter.'

ah! it is made as lightning. The prophet's voice rises to a shriek. The cry introduces the fourth strophe of the section. The comparison is an echo of verse 10.

16. Gather thee together, or as R. V. marg., 'make thyself one.' This does not seem a very natural way of addressing the sword, and Cornill and Kraetzschmar prefer a slight alteration which gives 'make thyself sharp.' The next words, **set thyself in array,** are missing in LXX, and not needed by the rhythm.

17 left; whithersoever thy face is set. I will also smite mine
hands together, and I will satisfy my fury: I the LORD
have spoken it.
18 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,
19 Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the
sword of the king of Babylon may come; they twain shall
come forth out of one land: and mark out a place, mark
20 it out at the head of the way to the city. Thou shalt
appoint a way, for the sword to come to Rabbah of the

The consonants are identical, save for one letter, with those of the following word, and would seem to be a copyist's error.

face. The phrase 'face of the sword' is regular in Hebrew for 'edge of the sword.'

17. Cf. verse 14, and v. 13.

xxi. 18–23. *The divination of the king of Babylon.* Here the torrent of the prophet's ecstasy pours itself into a clear pool, in which he sees what has before been the subject of obscure hints. The effect of the sudden change of rhythm, from poetry to prose, may be illustrated by the constant changes of rhythm in the choruses of Greek plays.

19. appoint thee two ways, *lit.* 'place for thyself'; as if the prophet drew a rough map on the ground with the point of the sword (cf. iv. 1). The two roads lead to Jerusalem and to Rabbah.

the sword. An echo of the previous section.

out of one land. Babylon.

place, *lit.* 'hand.' The reference is probably to a sign-post at the head of each road: cf. Jer. xxxi. 21. The same word, 'hand,' is used in 1 Sam. xv. 12 and Isa. lvi. 5. 'The city' stands for 'each city.'

20. Rabbah is now a ruined town on the east of Jordan, twenty-five miles north-east of the north end of the Dead Sea, still called Ammân. It is the only city of Ammon mentioned in the O. T. The name means 'great'; it had been captured by David (2 Sam. xii. 26-31), but had regained its independence. Ammon was now in league with Judah (see Jer. xxvii. 2; in Jer. xl. 11 we read of Jews in Ammon); and in Jerusalem there were hopes that since Nebuchadnezzar was at last invading Palestine he would march first against Ammon, and so allow time for further defence.

children of Ammon, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced. For the king of Babylon stood at the parting 21
of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he shook the arrows to and fro, he consulted the teraphim, he looked in the liver. In his right hand was the 22
divination *for* Jerusalem, to set battering rams, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounts, to build forts. And it shall be unto them as 23
a vain divination in their sight, which have sworn oaths

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21. parting, *lit.* 'mother.'

shook the arrows: two arrows, inscribed respectively with the names of the two cities, would be shaken in a quiver, and one of them drawn out. The practice was well known in Babylon and in Arabia: cf. Isa. xlvii. 8–15.

teraphim, a general name for images, familiar to Israel as well as to her neighbours: cf. Gen. xxxi. 19; Judges xvii. 5; 1 Sam. xix. 13; Hos. iii. 4.

liver. The king cannot trust to one means of foretelling the future. The British Museum contains a clay tablet with a representation of a sheep's liver covered with magic lines and oracles. The importance of the liver for this purpose was known to the Greeks and Romans: cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, xxxii; 'The faculty of prognostication belongs to that part of the soul which is situated in the liver, because that part has no share in reason or thought.' The Babylonian kings could do nothing without the priests, but they relied greatly on conjurers and soothsayers. Sargon II and Nebuchadnezzar, however, unlike the magic-ridden Assurbanipal, set their faces against magic and exalted the national religion. An interesting selection of Babylonian omens is given in Hastings' *Dict. Bib.* vol. v. pp. 558 ff.

22. Nebuchadnezzar pulls out with the right, or 'lucky' hand, the arrow marked 'Jerusalem.'

The siege is also described in iv. 2. The double reference to battering rams is probably a mistake of the copyist's.

23. unto them, i. e. to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, learning of Nebuchadnezzar's decision to attack them first. They do not yet despair.

a vain divination, i. e. they expect that this advance will bring no good to Nebuchadnezzar, since they have their defences and the looked-for help of Egypt: see note on verse 10, also on xi. 3.

unto them: but he bringeth iniquity to remembrance,
that they may be taken.
24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Because ye
have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your
transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings
your sins do appear; because that ye are come to
25 remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand. And
thou, O deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of
Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of
26 the end; thus saith the Lord GOD: Remove the mitre,

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which have sworn oaths unto them, 'an unintelligible gloss' (Toy). Ewald reads, 'they think they have weeks and weeks,' i. e. of time in which to prepare. Kraetzschmar ingeniously refers to the oath taken by Zedekiah and the princes (Jer. xxxiv. 8) which they afterwards broke (verse 11); hence, it is Zedekiah who brings the nation's sin to Yahweh's remembrance. The words might seem more naturally to refer to some covenant to hold the city against Babylon; and 'he' instead of a proper name, has been found very difficult. In view of verse 24, Smend suggests that the word for 'he' is really neuter; this is all but impossible grammatically; and a less difficult reference would be to Nebuchadnezzar, as if he were accusing the nation before God by his invasion. On the other hand, the attack upon Zedekiah in the following verses would suggest that the king, though unnamed, has been already in the prophet's mind. Whatever be the prophet's reference in the 'oaths,' the princes still refuse to believe in their danger, and the king's policy forces Yahweh to punish the nation's sin. Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 18.

xxi. 24–27. *The downfall of the prince.* The mention of Judah's sin rouses the prophet's frenzied mood once more; this time the chief object of his fury is Zedekiah.

24. to be remembered, by wilful and prolonged disobedience. Yahweh cannot forget their sin, even if he would.

25. day, hitherto generally used for the day of Yahweh or of the nation, but cf. Hos. vii. 5.

26. mitre: in the Levitical legislation the word is used for the 'turban' of the high-priest (Exod. xxviii. 4, &c.). In view of the care with which xlvi. 10 &c. relegate the prince to the position of a worshipper, the occurrence of 'mitre' as well as 'crown' suggests that Ezekiel is thinking of the performance of priestly functions by the king (1 Kings viii. 64, &c.).

and take off the crown: this *shall be* no more the same:
exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I 27
will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no
more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give
it *him*.

And thou, son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith 28
the Lord GOD concerning the children of Ammon, and
concerning their reproach; and say thou, A sword,
a sword is drawn, for the slaughter it is furbished, to
cause it to devour, that it may be as lightning: whiles 29
they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine lies unto
thee, to lay thee upon the necks of the wicked that are

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no more the same: *lit.* as R. V. marg., 'this shall be not this,' i. e. everything will be flung into confusion, 'turned upside down'; cf. the next verse, 'this shall be no more.'

27. until he come. The imminent ruin recalls the Messianic prophecy of Gen. xlix. 10, where, instead of Shiloh, Ezekiel seems to have read *shelloh*, 'to whom (it is).'

xxi. 28–32. *The death-blow of Ammon.* The prophet's excitement, growing in verse 27, now rises higher; he seizes the sword again, but this time he turns against the Ammonites (verse 20), who might have thought that they would escape when Judah was invaded. The full force, however, of the prophet's mood is spent, and as the sword is sheathed (verse 28) the prophecy ends with a prediction of ruin at once general and vague. Davidson, Kraetzschmar and others date this section later than the rest of the chapter, perhaps after the fall of Jerusalem. Ammon derided the Jews then (xxv. 3); might they not have derided the Jews at their first deportation also? Nor can we, with Smend, Davidson, and Cornill, regard the sword as Ammon's, prepared for conquests which Ammon is to make, unless we separate this section altogether from the rest of the chapter. Both suppositions are unnecessary; they do not remove the difficulties; and Ezekiel may well have felt angered at the self-interested abettors of Judah.

28. furbished . . . lightning. Cf. verses 9, 10.

29. they see vanity: in Ammon too there are diviners; and, like Judah, Ammon is mistaken in its confidence in them.

to lay thee upon the necks, i. e. the result of these divinations will be that Ammon, instead of surviving the invasion of

deadly wounded, whose day is come, in the time of the
30 iniquity of the end. Cause it to return into its sheath.
In the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy
31 birth, will I judge thee. And I will pour out mine
indignation upon thee; I will blow upon thee with the
fire of my wrath: and I will deliver thee into the hand
32 of brutish men, skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for
fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the
land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I the
LORD have spoken it.

22 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Nebuchadnezzar, will be involved in the fate that is coming upon Judah. The phrase is not used elsewhere, but the thought appears to be that when Judah (which was to be attacked first) is lying mortally wounded upon the field, Ammon is to be flung upon her body. Cornill and others read 'it' (i. e. 'the sword') instead of 'thee'; but if we are right in taking this section as connected with the preceding the change is unnecessary.

the iniquity of the end: the final wickedness of Judah: cf. verse 24.

30. Cause it to return. Here Ezekiel may be supposed to sheathe the sword. But why should the sword (literally or metaphorically) be sheathed before rather than after the sentence of doom? The sheathing of the sword marks the finality of the judgement sentence (in which case the action would have much dramatic impressiveness). Davidson, who understands the sword to be Ammon's (see note on verse 28), explains this verse to mean 'entertain no dreams of conquest abroad.' In any case Ammon's punishment is to fall on her in the invasion of her own territories.

31. brutish: this is significant for Ezekiel's thought of the Chaldaeans, in whose midst he dwells.

skilful to destroy, *lit.* 'smiths of destruction.' In the earlier stages of civilization the smith has always been regarded with mingled awe and contempt. Later Jewish writings contain references to demons with pitchforks, partly based, no doubt, on this passage, and in its turn influencing mediaeval frescoes of devils.

32. Unlike Judah and Egypt (xxii. 15, &c., and xxix. 12), Ammon is not to be dispersed, but destroyed.

xxii. After the passionate outburst of chap. xxi the prophet (verses 1–16) returns to the theme of chap. xx; but his excitement,

And thou, son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge 2
the bloody city? then cause her to know all her abomina-
tions. And thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: 3
A city that sheddeth blood in the midst of her, that her
time may come, and that maketh idols against herself to
defile her! Thou art become guilty in thy blood that 4
thou hast shed, and art defiled in thine idols which thou
hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near,
and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I
made thee a reproach unto the nations, and a mocking
to all the countries. Those that be near, and those that 5
be far from thee, shall mock thee, thou infamous one *and*

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though now under control, is felt in the rhetorical vigour of the attack (note the repeated 'in thee,' and 'to shed blood'); and he is thinking rather of the present sins (ritual and ethical) than (as in chap. xx) of the past. Then, with the idea of the caldron in his mind, he compares the doomed city (verses 17–22) to a smelting furnace, wherein all the various metals are melted down into one mass; and concludes (verses 23–8) with an analysis of the wickedness of each class in the state. The contrast between chaps. xxi and xxii is striking; in chap. xxi the prophet trembles at the coming destruction, but does not mention, save in verses 23–25, the wickedness which has caused it. In chap. xxii Yahweh's attitude is almost one of self-defence ('your wickedness is so great, that I can do nothing but destroy you': see especially verse 30); and for the time, all exultation over the condemned nation is absent.

xxii. 1–16. *Violence and idolatry.*

2. wilt thou judge? Cf. xx. 4.

3. Violence and idolatry are the two great crimes of the abandoned city; both are at once moral and ritual pollutions: cf. xxiv. 6, 9; also Jer. ii. 7, iii. 1, xvi. 18. The same phrase, 'bloody city,' is used by Nahum (iii. 1) of Nineveh. See also Matt. xxiii. 35.

her time: cf. xxi. 25.

against herself: though she knows it not, her idols are her real foes, as calling for her punishment.

4. thy days . . . thy years, of punishment: cf. xxi. 25; Eccles. xii. 1.

5. infamous: *lit.* polluted in name or reputation.

6 full of tumult. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one
according to his power, have been in thee to shed blood.
7 In thee have they set light by father and mother; in the
midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the
stranger: in thee have they wronged the fatherless and
8 the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and
9 hast profaned my sabbaths. Slanderous men have been
in thee to shed blood: and in thee they have eaten upon
the mountains: in the midst of thee they have committed
10 lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers'
nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was
11 unclean in her separation. And one hath committed
abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another
hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in

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full of tumult: see the following verses; *lit.* 'great or mighty, in tumult,' as if disorder were the city's only title to fame.

6. princes: cf. verse 27. Their conduct to Uriah and Jeremiah (Jer. xxvi. 21, xxxviii. 4, &c.) is the best commentary on this verse: cf. also Hos. v. 10, vii. 5; Mic. vii. 3; Zeph. iii. 3.

to shed blood. Cf. verses 2, 3, 4, 9, 12.

7. In thee: repeated in verses 10, 12.

Ezekiel begins his accusation with the elementary Hebrew virtues; for parents, cf. Exod. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16; Lev. xix. 5; for 'strangers,' cf. note on xiv. 7; Exod. xxii. 20; Deut. x. 19; for 'widows,' Exod. xxii. 21; Deut. xxiv. 17. See also note on xviii. 5.

8. sabbaths. See note on xx. 12: cf. Exod. xx. 8.

9. After the main sins have been mentioned others follow in no specific order. For 'eating upon the mountains,' &c., cf. xviii. 6.

10. The practice of marriage with the father's wife was frequent in Arabian antiquity; but, like much else that was common in the surrounding heathenism, is uniformly looked on with horror in the O. T.: cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 22; Lev. xviii. 7.

her that was unclean. Cf. xviii. 6.

11. Cf. Lev. xviii. 9, 15; 2 Sam. xiii. 13; also for Arabian customs, W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 89, 162. Idolatry meant a return to the lower moral standards of heathenism and the outbreaks of sexual licence often observed in connexion with the lower religions.

thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In 12
thee have they taken bribes to shed blood; thou hast
taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained
of thy neighbours by oppression, and hast forgotten me,
saith the Lord GOD. Behold, therefore, I have smitten 13
mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made,
and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee.
Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in 14
the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have
spoken it, and will do it. And I will scatter thee among 15
the nations, and disperse thee through the countries;
and I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou 16
shalt be profaned in thyself, in the sight of the nations;
and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 17, 18
of man, the house of Israel is become dross unto me:
all of them are brass and tin and iron and lead, in the

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12. Cf. ix. 9, xviii. 18; also Exod. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi. 19.

13. smitten mine hand: in indignation and loathing: cf. note on xxi. 14.

14. This question is generally understood as sarcastic; but see introductory note (p. 187).

15. Contrast the fate of Ammon, xxi. 30.

16. The first clause is difficult. Yahweh is profaned by his people's idolatries, and by their consequent dispersion among the nations; Israel is profaned and polluted by its sins, and is to be made ashamed of its evil deeds by its punishment; but Ezekiel does not elsewhere speak of Israel as being profaned, or (as the Hebrew may also mean) profaning itself, by exile. Read either 'I shall be profaned' (so Smend and Davidson) or 'thou shalt be ashamed' (Kraetzschmar).

xxii. 17–22. *The smelting furnace.*

18. Elsewhere we read of gold being tried in the fire; but the meaning of the figure here is quite different, and Ezekiel pointedly omits gold from his catalogue of metals. Note the scornfulness of the last clause. Cf. Isa. i. 22. This is a matter not of refining (as Isa. xlviii. 10) but destruction.

brass: see note on xxvii. 13.

midst of the furnace; they are the dross of silver.
19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Because ye are all
become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into
20 the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver and brass
and iron and lead and tin into the midst of the furnace,
to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you
in mine anger and in my fury, and I will lay you there,
21 and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon
you with the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in
22 the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of
the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof;
and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my
fury upon you.

3, 24 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son
of man, say unto her, Thou art a land that is not cleansed,
25 nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is
a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like
a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured
souls; they take treasure and precious things; they
26 have made her widows many in the midst thereof. Her

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19. I will gather you: apparently a reference to the fact that, as the certainty of siege approaches, the people from the surrounding country are forced to take refuge within the walls of Jerusalem. Cf. Thucyd. ii. 52 (the picture of the country people crowding within the walls of Athens when the Spartans invade Attica).

xxii. 23-31. *The universal corruption of the state, among princes, priests, magistrates, prophets, and people.* Ezekiel does not accord Zedekiah the honour here of any special reference.

24. nor rained upon: in the East, rain is the great giver of plenty and fertility. Judah is both defiled and parched up as her punishment falls upon her.

25. This description seems more appropriate to the princes. LXX, followed by most commentators, reads 'princes,' using a different word from that in verse 27; prophets are mentioned, as in xiii. 10 ff., in verse 28. The alteration from 'prophets' to 'princes' only needs the change of a single letter.

priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like 27
wolves ravening the prey; to shed blood, *and* to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain. And her 28
prophets have daubed for them with untempered *mortar*, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and 29
exercised robbery; yea, they have vexed the poor and needy, and have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And 30
I sought for a man among them, that should make up the fence, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that

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26. For the violence of priests, see Hos. vi. 9. The priests' duty is to teach to the people the difference between the clean and the unclean: cf. xliv. 23. The 'Torah' or 'law' committed to the priests means properly 'instruction.'

hid their eyes: took no trouble to keep my sabbaths hallowed: cf. note on xx. 13.

27. princes: rather, magistrates, compared to wolves, as the princes in verse 25 are compared to lions.

28. Cf. xiii. 10.

29. The sins of the upper classes are faithfully reflected in the lower. For 'stranger,' see verse 7. The phrase, which occurs also in vii. 27, xii. 19, &c., is a technical one in the later Jewish writings.

30. Cf. xiii. 5; and Gen. xviii. 24 ff. In this passage Ezekiel is thinking of a 'Saviour of Society,' who cannot be found. Jeremiah was still in Jerusalem; but he, as he himself knew, could not help: cf. Jer. xi. 14 and xv. 1 (not even a Moses or a Samuel would now be of any use). There is no real conflict between this passage and xiv. 14. There the goodness of the individual is thought of as counterbalancing the wickedness of the many; here, the individual who 'makes up the fence' inspires the many with his own goodness. In Isa. lix. 16, when Yahweh saw that there was no one to deliver, he himself stepped into the breach.

31 I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore
have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have
consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way
have I brought upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.
23 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
2 Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of
3 one mother: and they committed whoredoms in Egypt;

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xxiii. After the picture of Judah as she is, Ezekiel once more turns to history, as in chaps. xvi and xx; he employs the same vigorous imagery as in chap. xvi, but he treats here of the later history of the two kingdoms, and lays greater emphasis on their political connexions. Sodom is unmentioned, and, now that the ruin looms larger than ever on his sight, there is no suggestion of any future hope. The contempt with which Ezekiel speaks of the absence of a definite policy in these two nations is unmistakable. Would a definite policy, i.e. a definite conception of the relation of Israel to Assyria and Chaldaea, have been possible in the welter of hopes, fears, and intrigues in Western Asia? Ezekiel does not write as a statesman or diplomatist; the political was merged in the religious interest. But, whatever might have happened to the more exposed Israel, there can be little doubt that had Judah carried out the general prophetic programme of internal stability and order, and of freedom from foreign complications, her geographical position was such that she would not only have escaped, as she actually did in spite of herself, from Sennacherib, but also from Nebuchadnezzar; she was never in real danger from Egypt.

Ezekiel begins by introducing Samaria and Jerusalem or Judah as two sisters, harlots (verses 1–4); he describes the intrigues of Samaria (verses 5–10), and then (verses 11–21) those of Judah, with Assyria, Chaldaea, and Egypt. Such sin (verses 22–35) can only be punished by its instruments (cf. xvi. 37 ff.), and the description is concluded (verses 36–49) by a fresh picture of the crimes and the penalty of the two guilty women.

xxiii. 1–5. *The two sisters.*

2. Samaria and Jerusalem are sisters in xvi. 46; hence, the daughters of one mother.

3. in Egypt: cf. verse 8 and xx. 8 (see note *ad loc.*). The word for 'bruise' is used, in Lev. xxii. 24, for 'castrate.' Throughout this chapter the 'realism' of Ezekiel is much more developed and detailed than in chap. xvi. It is all the more striking to us because, in comparison with other ancient literature, Indian and Babylonian, and even with Homer and Elizabethan poetry, the

they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. And the names of them were Oholah 4
the elder, and Oholibah her sister: and they became mine, and they bare sons and daughters. And as for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem Oholibah. And Oholah played the harlot when she was mine; and 5
she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians *her* neighbours, which were clothed with blue, governors and rulers, all of 6
them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses.

Bible as a whole is remarkably reticent and refined. In this chapter Ezekiel aims at making sin appear monstrous.

4. For the similarity between these two names, Ewald compares Hasan and Husain. The two names probably do not mean, as R. V. margin, 'Her tent,' and 'My tent is in her,' but 'She who has a tent,' and 'A tent is in her'; the 'i' in the second name does not necessarily represent the possessive of the first personal pronoun any more than in 'Oholibamah' (Esau's wife, Gen. xxxvi. 2) or, probably, Hephzi-bah (Isa. lxii. 4). It would seem to be mere accident that the names have the same number of letters as the Hebrew words for Samaria and Jerusalem. 'Tent' refers naturally to the tents on the High Places (xvi. 16). The two names should properly be pronounced Ŏhŏlah and Ohŏlibah, the 'i' having the sound of *ee* in *been*.

they became mine, as Jacob married sisters.

xxiii. 5-10. *The wickedness of Oholah; Assyria.*

played the harlot: cf. xvi. 15, and Isa. i. 21.

the Assyrians her neighbours. Assyria first appears in Israel in the reign of Menahem: 2 Kings xv. 19; cf. Hos. v. 13, vii. 11, xii. 2. It could hardly be called a 'neighbour'; the distance from Samaria to Nineveh, across the desert, is 400 miles; the word might be rendered 'warriors,' or, by a slight change, 'famous'; either sense would suit those terrors of Western Asia.

6. governors and rulers: two words borrowed from the Assyrian, which correspond more nearly to 'satraps and viceroys.' For 'horsemen,' cf. note xvii. 15. A young Palestinian girl might well lose her heart to gorgeous Assyrian 'lifeguardsmen,' every one of whom looked like an officer: cf. verse 15.

7. As in chap. xvi, political 'whoredom' brings religious corruption with it. Cf. the reference in Amos v. 26 to the worship of the Assyrian 'Sakkut' and 'Kewan.'

7 And she bestowed her whoredoms upon them, the
choicest men of Assyria all of them: and on whomso-
ever she doted, with all their idols she defiled herself.
8 Neither hath she left her whoredoms since *the days of*
Egypt; for in her youth they lay with her, and they
bruised the teats of her virginity: and they poured out
9 their whoredom upon her. Wherefore I delivered her
into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians,
10 upon whom she doted. These discovered her naked-
ness: they took her sons and her daughters, and her they
slew with the sword: and she became a byword among
11 women; for they executed judgements upon her. And her
sister Oholibah saw this, yet was she more corrupt in
her doting than she, and in her whoredoms which were
12 more than the whoredoms of her sister. She doted upon
the Assyrians, governors and rulers, *her* neighbours,
clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses,

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8. the days of Egypt: see notes on xvi. 26, xx. 7. Here the reference is undoubtedly to the bondage in Egypt, since the later political relations of Egypt (after Solomon) were not with the Northern but the Southern Kingdom. See Gen. xxxiv. 2; Lev. xv. 8.

9. For the tragic irony of this verse, cf. xvi. 37. Ezekiel here advances in sternness upon Hosea (ii. 10).

xxiii. 11–21. *The wickedness of Oholibah; Assyria and Babylon.*

11. her sister... saw this: the description implies that Judah's sin was later than that of Israel, and more heinous. The narrative in Kings lays stress on the fact that the wickedness of Israel was unrelieved by reforms such as took place in Judah under Asa and Hezekiah and Josiah; but Ezekiel's language is what we should expect from one whose very love for Judah makes him feel her guilt the more deeply. After the death of Josiah the moral condition of Jerusalem would seem to have been as bad as that of Samaria in her last days.

12. Cf. verse 6. Assyrian intervention in the affairs of Judah dates from Ahaz's invitation to Tiglath-Pileser to attack Syria and Ephraim (2 Kings xvi. 7, and Isa. vii. 17 ff.), and continued through the reign of Hezekiah.

all of them desirable young men. And I saw that she 13
was defiled; they both took one way. And she increased 14
her whoredoms; for she saw men pourtrayed upon the
wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with
vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding 15
in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes
to look upon, after the likeness of the Babylonians in
Chaldea, the land of their nativity. And as soon as she 16
saw them she doted upon them, and sent messengers
unto them into Chaldea. And the Babylonians came to 17
her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their
whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her
soul was alienated from them. So she discovered her 18
whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my

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13. I saw: cf. verses 9, 18. Yahweh sees, but for a time does nothing to mark his displeasure.

14. The feeling that lies beneath passages such as this explains the sterner Hebrew attitude to art. At present, an Oriental woman of good position would never see strange men save in pictures; and though Hebrew women had more freedom, Ezekiel compares Judah's desire for closer acquaintance with Babylon to a wanton girl's desire for a world from which she would naturally be secluded.

15. exceeding in dyed attire: R.V. marg. 'with dyed turbans'; properly, 'with turbans wound round and hanging down.' Babylonian head-dresses with thin strings or fillets are common on the monuments. The word translated 'exceeding' means to spread or sprawl, like the vine in xvii. 6.

princes: the word used here seems to mean 'a third,' perhaps in the chariot with king and charioteer, such as is seen sometimes (though not in battle scenes) on the monuments; perhaps originally the word meant an officer of the third rank ('third lieutenant'), and then was used more generally; it occurs in Exod. xiv. 7.

16. sent messengers. This can hardly be a reference to 2 Kings xx. 12; but our knowledge of the history of Judah in the seventh century is slight.

17. Judah could not be constant, even in sin. Her desires were purely animal.

18. The fullness of the style here, and more especially the repetition of the most scathing expression, are characteristic of Ezekiel.

soul was alienated from her, like as my soul was alienated
19 from her sister. Yet she multiplied her whoredoms,
remembering the days of her youth, wherein she had
20 played the harlot in the land of Egypt. And she doted
upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses,
21 and whose issue is like the issue of horses. Thus thou
calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in
the bruising of thy teats by the Egyptians for the breasts
of thy youth.

22 Therefore, O Oholibah, thus saith the Lord GOD:
Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from
whom thy soul is alienated, and I will bring them against
23 thee on every side; the Babylonians and all the Chal-
deans, Pekod and Shoa and Koa, *and* all the Assyrians

After growing tired of Babylon she cast all shame aside; she would form an alliance with any one, even Ammon (xxi. 20). Yahweh's long-suffering is now at an end.

19. the land of Egypt: cf. verse 8. Both Hezekiah and Jehoiakim relied on Egyptian help; Josiah had died fighting against Egypt.

20. paramours. The word is used only here as a masculine. Cf. xvi. 34.

the flesh of asses. Ezekiel here uses proverbial phrases to express his contemptuous loathing.

21. calledst to remembrance: properly, 'didst recall,' or 'look round for,' in order to repeat it.

xxiii. 22-35. *Oholibah's punishment*: cf. verse 9 and xvi. 39. In Hosea's parable the unfaithful wife is to be left desolate for a time, and then, in the desert, to hear comfortable words from her husband. In chap. xvi Yahweh judges her and then leaves her to her quondam lovers; here he simply lets them loose on her (verse 24); while in verse 45 the judgement is pronounced by righteous men, and the same punishment follows. Had Ezekiel lived in modern times he might have referred to the terrible physical results of sexual vice.

22. After the fulfilment of such impure desires the loathing is mutual. Such sin as Judah has indulged and aroused could only have one result; its punishment is not arbitrary but inevitable.

23. the Chaldeans. The name is used in a wider sense than

with them: desirable young men, governors and rulers all of them, princes and men of renown, all of them riding upon horses. And they shall come against thee 24
with weapons, chariots, and wagons, and with an assembly of peoples; they shall set themselves against thee with buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will commit the judgement unto them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgements. And I will set my 25
jealousy against thee, and they shall deal with thee in fury; they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy residue shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. They shall also strip thee of thy clothes, and 26
take away thy fair jewels. Thus will I make thy lewdness 27
to cease from thee, and thy whoredom *brought* from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes

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'Babylonians,' and includes the following names; these latter were a riddle to the ancients (the Vulgate renders them by 'noble tyrants and princes'); they have been identified with the Assyrian Gentile names Pukûdu, Sutû and Kutû. Winckler has pointed out that as these peoples do not belong to the Assyrians, the *and*, which the R. V. inserts in italics, should be read in the Hebrew text. The situation of all these peoples was on the borders of Elam, east of Babylonia.

For the last part of the verse cf. verse 12; the 'lovers' now come for a different purpose.

24. weapons: this word does not occur elsewhere; the LXX reads 'from the North.'

25. jealousy: cf. viii. 3. xvi. 38, xxxvi. 5, and Introd. pp. 33 ff. In this context the word is no longer startling; in a Christian dress, the thought takes shape in Whittier's lines:

> Thou judgest us: Thy purity
> Doth all our lusts condemn:
> The love that draws us nearer Thee
> Is hot with wrath to them.

thy nose: the punishment awarded by the Egyptians to adulteresses (Diod. Sic., I. 78: Assyrian wall-sculptures bear out all these atrocities, and more.

28 unto them, nor remember Egypt any more. For thus
saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will deliver thee into
the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of
29 them from whom thy soul is alienated: and they shall
deal with thee in hatred, and shall take away all thy
labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the
nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both
30 thy lewdness and thy whoredoms. These things shall
be done unto thee, for that thou hast gone a whoring
after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with
31 their idols. Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister;
32 therefore will I give her cup into thine hand. Thus
saith the Lord GOD: Thou shalt drink of thy sister's
cup, which is deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to
33 scorn and had in derision; it containeth much. Thou
shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the
cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy
34 sister Samaria. Thou shalt even drink it and drain it
out, and thou shalt gnaw the sherds thereof, and shalt

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28. whom thou hatest: cf. verses 17, 22; see also note on xvi. 37. Verses 28–30 are in the main a repetition of the thoughts already expressed in verses 22–27, but the expression is too independent to warrant us in putting them down as a gloss or a 'doublet': cf. verses 32, 33, and the general recapitulation in verses 36–49.

31. Cf. verse 11. For the figure of the 'cup,' cf. Jer. xxv. 15; Ps. lxxv. 8; Matt. xxvi. 39; contrast Ps. cxvi. 13 and 1 Cor. x. 16.

32. it containeth much: Kraetzschmar suggests that the 'drunkenness' (or, as he would read, 'overthrow') and 'sorrow' of verse 33 are really the contents which fill the cup itself; such must be the meaning, whether we alter the text or not.

34. A striking description of the brute folly of intoxication (the close companion of sexual impurity). Cf. Dante's description of the punishment of Ugolino and Ruggieri in Hell (*Inf.* xxxii. 124–132), or Browning's scarcely less terrible lines in *The Ring and the Book* ('Caponsacchi,' ll. 1,932 ff.). Note the emphasis in the last clause of the verse.

tear thy breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Because 35
thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

The LORD said moreover unto me: Son of man, wilt 36
thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? then declare unto them their abominations. For they have committed 37
adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery; and they have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass through *the fire* unto them to be devoured. Moreover 38
this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their 39
idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house. And furthermore ye have sent for men that 40
come from far: unto whom a messenger was sent, and, lo,

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xxiii. 36-49. *Recapitulation of the sin and punishment of the two sisters.* Smend finds in the parallel references to Oholah and Oholibah another suggestion that the chapter was written after 586 B. C., but the coupling of the still standing Jerusalem with the fallen Samaria has great dramatic and rhetorical force.

36. wilt thou judge? Cf. xx. 4, xxii. 2.

37. The chief pause should be placed after 'hands'; Ezekiel sums up the nation's sins under the two heads of adultery and blood on the one side, idolatry in general and child-sacrifice on the other (cf. xvi. 20).

38. the same day: *lit.* 'that day,' cf. verse 39, v. 11, xx. 13.

40-44. The text of these verses is specially corrupt. The LXX differs considerably, and Kraetzschmar regards the verses as a combination of two parallel passages; no emendations, however, are convincing.

40. ye have sent: the prophet here turns to the two women; but the language changes to the singular, and then to the third person, first in the singular, and then in the plural, as rapidly as the thought. Cf. verse 16.

they came; for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst
41 thine eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments; and
satest upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it,
whereupon thou didst set mine incense and mine oil.
42 And the voice of a multitude being at ease was with her:
and with men of the common sort were brought drunkards
from the wilderness; and they put bracelets upon the
hands of them *twain*, and beautiful crowns upon their
43 heads. Then said I of her that was old in adulteries,
Now will they commit whoredoms with her, and she
44 *with them*. And they went in unto her, as they go in
unto an harlot: so went they in unto Oholah and unto
45 Oholibah, the lewd women. And righteous men, they
shall judge them with the judgement of adulteresses, and
with the judgement of women that shed blood; because
46 they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands. For
thus saith the Lord GOD: I will bring up an assembly
against them, and will give them to be tossed to and fro

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paintedst. The Hebrew verb is connected with the Arabic word which appears in English as *alcohol*; the material used was very fine powder of antimony.

41. Observe **mine incense:** cf. xvi. 18, and note thereon.

42. The utter degradation of Judah, corresponding to verse 18. 'From the wilderness' may refer to embassies of Bedouin tribes asking for alliance in revolting from Nebuchadnezzar. The correction in the margin of the Hebrew text, for 'drunkards,' suggests 'Sabaeans,' which is appropriate to 'wilderness,' and also to the succeeding clauses.

43. If the text is right, the R. V. marg. ('even with her') is preferable to 'and she with them,' though very difficult. But the LXX represents a quite different reading. The first clause seems to mean that, prolonged as Judah's sins of the flesh have been, she will still find partners in her guilt.

45. righteous men: there is here no special reference to the nations. Cf. verse 36, and contrast verse 24.

46. The punishment is not only inevitable; it is simply the sin prolonged. 'Peccatum poena peccati,' again. They are to be forced to fresh prostitution. The same thought is expressed,

and spoiled. And the assembly shall stone them with 47
stones, and despatch them with their swords; they shall
slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their
houses with fire. Thus will I cause lewdness to cease 48
out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do
after your lewdness. And they shall recompense your 49
lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your
idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the 24

though less startlingly, in Ps. xviii. 26; Rev. xxii. 11; see also xxiv. 8; and it is certainly true in the physiological realm, where a vicious taste becomes a positive but irremovable torture. For another picture of unpardonable sin, see Milton, *P. L.*, iv. 32–113.

48. all women: the surrounding nations. Righteousness was thus to be enforced by the Jews' punishment, not by their preaching. Contrast the conception of the function of the servant of Yahweh in Isa. xlii, &c. The Jews have been a spectacle—'tossed to and fro'—through the ages; but what Ezekiel expected to be done by the fall of Jerusalem has been done by Calvary.

xxiv. *The last moments before the final crash.* Ezekiel has now completed his 'judgements' of the city, and he learns that at last the siege has commenced—the siege which he knows is not to be raised. Thereupon the old mood of horror at the wickedness and the fate of the city returns upon him, and with it the recollection of that boastful comparison of the city to the caldron which expressed the impious infatuation of the remnant in Jerusalem. He has already given a sombre interpretation to the words; now he carries out the grim jest still further; and yet it is no jest, but the earnestness of fierce moral denunciation of the bloody city (verses 6, 9: cf. xxii. 2, xxiii. 37, 45); concluding with a final word from Yahweh that expresses no anger, but only relentless determination.

Then the message and the mood change. His own wife dies! He is stunned. But as he sits plunged in misery too deep to manifest any of the usual signs of grief, his own prophecies and the city's fate recur to his mind; that blow, when it comes, will be no less terrible, no less paralysing for the whole nation, than the loss of the desire of his eyes has been for him. We are reminded inevitably of Hosea's interpretation of his own tragic married life; did the prophets both find consolation for their own woe in the thought of its wider significance? A man must go

tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came
2 unto me, saying, Son of man, write thee the name of the
day, *even* of this selfsame day: the king of Babylon drew
3 close unto Jerusalem this selfsame day. And utter
a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them,
Thus saith the Lord GOD, Set on the caldron, set it on,

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through such suffering for himself before he can answer the question. But while Hosea's wife has been as guilty as the nation, Ezekiel (who has never compared the nation to his own wife in chaps. xvi or xxiii) cannot but feel the contrast between the beloved one whom he has lost and the city whose own guilt has been her ruin, the loved sanctuary which Yahweh is forced to profane. Again, Hosea's words throb with his own bursting grief; Ezekiel now speaks with a strange calm. We are half reminded of the mood in which the Scottish Covenanter, James Welwood, spoke on the morning after the death of his wife: 'I declare I have not, all this night, had one thought of the death of my wife, I have been so taken up with heavenly things; I have been this night upon the banks of the Ulai, plucking an apple here and there.'[1] But beneath these quiet, almost hard words, can be heard the set tones of the man who once grew passionate over the woes of his people, but now has no words wherewith to voice his own and his people's grief.[2] No wailing cry over Jerusalem in the Lamentations is more heartrending than this strange dirge for her; nor has deeper grief for her been felt than his who thus united loss of city and of wife in one sorrow—except perhaps, when the Son of Man 'beheld the city and wept over her.'

xxiv. 1–14. *The real significance of the Parable of the Caldron.*

1. Jan. 587 B.C. The same date is given in 2 Kings xxv. 1; Jer. lii. 4. The city was besieged for a year and a half; and no other message is given to Ezekiel during the siege.

2. drew close, or as R.V. marg., 'leaned upon'—a peculiarly vivid way of expressing the investment of the city; 'Nebuchadnezzar leaned his weight upon it.' The same word is used in xxx. 6 for those who 'prop up' the power of Egypt.

This verse forces on us in the clearest fashion the dilemma—either Ezekiel was a deliberate deceiver, or he was possessed of some kind of second sight.

3. the caldron: cf. xi. 3, and note *ad loc.*

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[1] Patrick Walker, *Lives of the Covenanters.*

[2] Compare Dr. John Brown's account of his father's conduct in a like bereavement (*Letter to Dr. John Cairns*).

and also pour water into it: gather the pieces thereof 4
into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder;
fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the 5
flock, and pile also the bones under it: make it boil
well; yea, let the bones thereof be seethed in the midst
of it.

Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Woe to the 6
bloody city, to the caldron whose rust is therein, and
whose rust is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by
piece; no lot is fallen upon it. For her blood is in the 7
midst of her; she set it upon the bare rock; she poured
it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; that it 8
might cause fury to come up to take vengeance, I have
set her blood upon the bare rock, that it should not be
covered. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Woe to 9
the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. Heap 10
on the wood, make the fire hot, boil well the flesh, and
make thick the broth, and let the bones be burned.
Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be 11
hot, and the brass thereof may burn, and that the

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4. choice bones, the leaders in Jerusalem; the irony is worth noting.

5. the bones . . . seethed: a vivid reference to the heat of the Chaldaean attack; in verse 10 'the bones are actually burnt.'

6. piece by piece: i. e. at random, without 'standing on the order' of the removal of the princes (verse 7). The rust is the blood of the murders in Jerusalem. Hence, also, 'no lot is fallen upon it,' i. e. no settled order (for destruction) is arranged.

7. upon the bare rock: she is unashamed, and therefore (verse 8) unforgiven.

to cover it: while still uncovered spilt blood cries for vengeance: cf. Gen. iv. 10; Job xvi. 18; Heb. xii. 24.

8. I have set. Yahweh, as it were, 'fixes' the blood-stain The first person is continued in verse 9.

10. bones . . . burned. See note on verse 5.

11. Observe the dramatic suddenness of 'empty'; the position of the word is still more emphatic in the Hebrew; nor is there

filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the rust of it
12 may be consumed. She hath wearied *herself* with toil:
yet her great rust goeth not forth out of her; her rust
13 *goeth not forth* by fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness:
because I have purged thee and thou wast not purged,
thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more,
14 till I have satisfied my fury upon thee. I the LORD have
spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will
not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent;
according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall
they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

15, 16 Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son
of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of
thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn

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anything in the Hebrew to correspond to the change of gender ('her' to 'it') in the English versions. For 'brass' cf. note on xxvii. 13.

12. herself: better, 'me,' as R.V. margin. The Jerusalemites in chap. xi do not think of the rust; to Yahweh that is the main thing; he has tried to get rid of it before; now there remains nothing but to destroy the caldron (verse 13): cf. Jer. xiii. 27. In the Hebrew the clause is very similar to the last clause of verse 11, and the LXX, apparently regarding the two clauses as identical, has omitted the words in verse 12.

14. To the close of this verse the LXX adds, 'Wherefore I will judge thee according to thy bloody deeds, and according to thy thoughts will I judge thee, thou that art a by-word for uncleanness and fruitful in rebellion.' The words are quite characteristic of Ezekiel, and if we may assume two recensions of the text, they may very well have appeared in one and been absent in the other.

xxiv. 15-27. *The end. The Prophet's bereavement and the People's desolation.*

16. Ezekiel is too reticent to allow of a full interpretation of his experience. He learns, however, that he will lose his wife (perhaps she has been already ill; in any case, the end is to come suddenly, 'at a blow'); and he foresees that his grief will be stupefying.

nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Sigh, but 17
not aloud; make no mourning for the dead, bind thy
headtire upon thee, and put thy shoes upon thy feet,
and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.
So I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even 18
my wife died: and I did in the morning as I was
commanded. And the people said unto me, Wilt thou 19
not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest
so? Then I said unto them, The word of the LORD 20
came unto me, saying, Speak unto the house of Israel, 21
Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will profane my
sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your
eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons
and your daughters whom ye have left behind shall fall
by the sword. And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall 22
not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men. And 23
your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes
upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye

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17. The general signs of mourning were to loose the turban, take off the shoes, cut the beard, and eat 'mourning bread' (perhaps a reminiscence of sacrificial meals for the dead): cf. 2 Sam. xii. 20. Ezekiel will not make the customary sign of silence in mourning, nor eat the usual 'funeral food.' Cf. Jer. xvi. 7; also Mic. iii. 7, and Lev. xiii. 45.

18. On one morning he tells the people what he has learnt; in the evening his wife dies; next morning no customary signs of grief are shown by the bereaved husband. The LXX strangely omits the mention of the death of the wife.

19. As in the case of the other acts of the prophet, the people feel there must be some significance therein for themselves.

21. In chap. xvi the nation is compared to Yahweh's wife; here the city and temple are spoken of as being as dear to the nation as was his own wife to Ezekiel.

whom ye have left behind: a valuable side-light on the character of the first deportation.

22, 23. Here Ezekiel speaks in his own person. 'When the city falls, your grief will be as great as mine is now; you too will sit like men turned to stone.' Cf. Isa. xlvii. 5.

shall pine away in your iniquities, and moan one toward
24 another. Thus shall Ezekiel be unto you a sign; according to all that he hath done shall ye do: when this cometh, then shall ye know that I am the Lord GOD.
25 And thou, son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set
26 their heart, their sons and their daughters, that in that day he that escapeth shall come unto thee, to cause thee
27 to hear it with thine ears? In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: so shalt thou be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

25 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son

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23. pine away: at this point the analogy between Ezekiel's grief and the nation's ceases. The latter will include the bitterness of a guilty conscience—an actual consciousness of sin. Cf. xxxiii. 10; the same Hebrew word is used in Isa. xxxiv. 4 (of stars) and Ps. xxxviii. 6 (of tumours).

moan. This does not really contradict the previous part of the verse; like Ezekiel, the exiles will be silent (cf. verse 17), as far as the loud wailing cry is concerned; but their grief will find vent in low groans of anguish. The meaning of the word is illustrated by Prov. xix. 12, xx. 2, xxviii. 15; Isa. v. 30; more nearly in Prov. v. 11. LXX has, instead, 'ye shall comfort each his brother.'

24. In this verse Yahweh is again the speaker.

25. Note the warmth of the terms here used: cf. verse 21.

26. See on xxxiii. 21.

27. to him: better, as R.V. marg. 'together with him.' 'To him' implies that Ezekiel had been actually speechless, which is not the case; see note on xxxii. 6. When his predictions are verified the 'dumbness' which had prevented all public utterance will be removed.

There is no peroration, save the already familiar phrase; Israel will see in all this the revelation of Yahweh.

PART II.

DIVISION I. THE FALL OF THE NATIONS (xxv-xxxii).

With chap. xxiv (the investment of the city) the first half of

of man, set thy face toward the children of Ammon, and

Ezekiel's prophecy, the 'pars destruens' is at an end. Two years later the news of the fall of Jerusalem reaches Tel-abib, and Ezekiel commences a new series of prophecies to Israel (chap. xxxiii). The intervening prophecies were delivered at various times (cf. xxvi. 1, xxix. 1, 17, xxx. 20, xxxi. 1, xxxii. 1, 17), but they are here naturally grouped together. They form a real unity, as dealing with the neighbours of Israel, first in a narrower (chap. xxv) and then in a wider sense (chaps. xxvi–xxxii), on whose fortunes her own must, humanly speaking, depend; their fall 'clears the way' for that new order of things which, when the barbarian invaders from the north have been destroyed (chaps. xxxviii and xxxix), will leave Israel undisturbed to worship Yahweh. Amos (more symmetrically even than Ezekiel), Isaiah, and Jeremiah contain sections dealing with the 'nations'; in each case the utterance of natural hatred and national hostility is combined with that of moral reprobation; peculiar to Ezekiel is the tone of mingled awe and exultation, which is also one of the glories of the choruses of Aeschylus. To Ezekiel the real guilt of the nations is what Aeschylus called 'hybris,' insulting pride. They had dared to set themselves in the place of Him who was the God of the whole earth, and to be, in another sense from Rom. ii. 14, a 'law unto themselves.' The only direct mention of a special sin against Yahweh's people is in connexion with Edom (xxv. 12, xxxv. 5). Their destruction, however, is Israel's peace. Ezekiel's immediate successor had wider views; but how far revelation had to travel before the apostle of the Gentiles learnt that the casting away of Israel was the reconciling of the world! (Rom. xi. 15.)

On the question of the actual fulfilment of these prophecies, see Introd., pp. 21 ff. It is not without significance that the nations referred to are seven in number. The four neighbouring peoples are first dealt with briefly; then comes a collection of longer prophecies against Tyre (with an appendix on Sodom and a glimpse of the future return of Israel); and another collection of prophecies on Egypt, with a further prophecy relating to Tyre (see notes on xxix. 17–20). The whole section concludes with a remarkable picture of the gathering of all the nations in Sheol. A further attack on Edom (chap. xxxv) occurs in the succeeding section (see notes *ad loc.*). This section is noteworthy as containing three passages which relate to subjects rarely alluded to in the rest of the O. T.—the commerce of Tyre, the Cherub in Eden, and the Land of the Dead (see notes on xxvii, xxviii. 11–19, and xxxii). The passages are the more interesting since, though obscure to us because of the rigid methods of selection which have governed the formation of the O. T. canon, they refer to what must have been familiar regions of Jewish thought.

3 prophesy against them: and say unto the children of
Ammon, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith
the Lord GOD: Because thou saidst, Aha, against my
sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land
of Israel, when it was made desolate; and against the
4 house of Judah, when they went into captivity: therefore
behold, I will deliver thee to the children of the east for
a possession, and they shall set their encampments in
thee, and make their dwellings in thee; they shall eat
5 thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk. And I will
make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the children of
Ammon a couching place for flocks: and ye shall know
6 that I am the LORD. For thus saith the Lord GOD:

SECTION I. ORACLES AGAINST THE FOUR NEIGHBOURS OF JUDAH (XXV).

These are Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines. There is no evidence for the date of this chapter, save that it is evidently later than the fall of Jerusalem.

XXV. 1–7. *On Ammon.* See xxi. 28–32; Zeph. ii. 8–11; Jer. xlix. 1–6; Edom, Ammon, and Moab were closely connected in race with the Hebrews; their language was almost identical (as is shown by the inscription of the Moabite king Mesha), and their religious cultus was also similar (to judge from the remains of the Edomite sanctuary at Petra). They were in constant conflict with Israel, subdued by the stronger monarchs, and then reasserting their independence. All three states coquetted with the Assyrian and Chaldaean invaders, and were left as flotsam in their territories east of the Jordan after the exile of the Jews (cf. verse 3).

2. Ammon: the most northerly of the three states. See Map.

3. profaned. Cf. note on vii. 22; and Jer. xl. 14, xlix. 1.

4. children of the east, the Bedouin nomads, who are thus to punish the once nomadic Ammonites 'in their own coin.'

encampments: the stone ring within which the Bedouin tents are pitched. Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9. 7) says that in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Moab and Ammon; the desert tribes would then find the survivors of Ammon an easy prey.

5. Rabbah: see note on xxi. 20.

6. Cf. verse 8. This 'Schadenfreude' in her neighbours the Jews could never forget.

Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced with all the despite of thy soul against the land of Israel; therefore behold, I have 7
stretched out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the nations; and I will cut thee off from the peoples, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because that Moab and 8
Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the nations; therefore behold, I will open the side of 9
Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim, unto the children of the east, *to* 10
go against the children of Ammon, and I will give them for a possession, that the children of Ammon may not be remembered among the nations: and I will execute 11
judgements upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

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7. Jeremiah (xlix. 6) foretells a restoration for Ammon; Ezekiel holds out no hope: cf. verse 10.

xxv. 8–11. *On Moab.* The Moabite country lay east of the Dead Sea: cf. G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* pp. 48, 53, 548, for this region.

8. Seir, or Edom, out of place here, and omitted in LXX.

9. Baal-meon is mentioned in Mesha's inscription; so is Kiriathaim. The latter previously belonged to Reuben; it is perhaps to be identified with Kurêjât (Num. xxxii. 37: cf. Jer. xlviii. 1). As these cities are all north of the Arnon, and as the doom of Moab is not complete, Ezekiel seems to suggest that in the future Moab's territories would be confined to the south of the Arnon.

xxv. 12–14. *On Edom*; the southernmost of the three states. Edom is referred to in the O. T. with peculiar hostility (cf. Obad. 10–14), just as she was, as suggested by the account of her descent from Esau, more nearly allied to Israel than either Ammon or Moab. Consanguinity always makes hate the keener. She alone is singled out for mention in connexion with the promises to Israel, in

12 Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because that Edom hath
dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance,
and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon
13 them; therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, I will stretch
out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and
beast from it: and I will make it desolate from Teman;
14 even unto Dedan shall they fall by the sword. And I
will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my
people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to
mine anger and according to my fury: and they shall
know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.
15 Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because the Philistines
have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with
16 despite of soul to destroy it with perpetual enmity; there-
fore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will stretch out
mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the

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chap. xxxv. She had stood by the Chaldaeans in the war (as Judah had been bidden to do), and had gloried in the advantage it gave her (cf. xxxii. 29; Jer. xxv. 21, xxvii. 3; also Deut. xxiii. 7; 2 Kings iii. 9; Isa. lxiii. 1; 2 Chron. xx. 10). The Herods were Idumaeans or Edomites.

13. Teman: cf. xx. 46. The northern district of Edom, used in Amos i. 12 for Edom itself; its inhabitants being proverbial for their wisdom; Jer. xlix. 7: cf. Job vi. 19. Eliphaz was a Temanite.

Dedan, an Arabian tribe dwelling on the southern borders of Edom (Isa. xxi. 13; Jer. xxv. 23). See xxvii. 15, 20.

14. Edom, unlike the others, is to be punished by God and Israel together.

xxv. 15–17. *On the Philistines*; a people dwelling on the sea-coast of Palestine (verse 16), of unknown origin, but believed by several to be invaders from the west, possibly from Crete, whose civilization stretches back to the third millennium before Christ. In the Prophetic Books the LXX renders 'Cerethites' by 'Cretans.' The narratives in Samuel suggest a rather high level of political organization among the Philistine 'cities.' After long-continued hostility, we find the Philistines and Hezekiah joined in a common enmity to Assyria. They were extinguished under the Hasmonaeans. Notice the vagueness with which their doom is foretold.

Cherethites, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast.
And I will execute great vengeance upon them with 17
furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD,
when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first 26

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16. Cherethites: members of this Philistine tribe formed part of David's bodyguard (2 Sam. viii. 18; the name of their comrades, the Pelethites, also suggests a Philistine origin). There is here a grim play on the words *Cherethites*, and *hikratli*, 'I will cut off.'

17. great vengeance: cf. verse 14. It is hardly fair to say with Toy that 'Ezekiel's attitude to all these peoples is determined not by religious or moral but by political considerations.' Ezekiel writes as a Jew, i. e. as one who identifies Yahweh's antipathies with his own; to him a nation which hated Judah hated Yahweh; the moral and the political could not be dissociated.

SECTION II. ORACLES AGAINST TYRE AND SIDON (xxvi–xxviii).

xxvi. *The Attack of Nebuchadnezzar upon Tyre* (verses 1–14), *and Tyre's subsequent fate* (verses 15–21). Tyre was the Venice of antiquity; each city was built on an island (Tyre means 'rock') just off the mainland; the policy of each was frankly and consistently commercial, but welcomed political influence for the sake of commercial supremacy. Tyre was the younger rival of Sidon, but early made herself paramount and pursued a bolder policy (Isa. xxiii. 3), which was stimulated by rivalry with the Greeks, 'the intruders' on her 'ancient home.' Her relations with Israel were friendly from the time of David onwards. She had joined in a league with Zedekiah and others against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxvii. 3); Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre lasted, according to Josephus, thirteen years; in the end Nebuchadnezzar was obliged to retire (as was Alexander subsequently); but Tyre apparently acknowledged his suzerainty. Herodotus (ii. 161) and Diodorus Siculus (i. 68) recount an attack of Hophra on Tyre or Phoenicia, presumably as being a dependency of Nebuchadnezzar. Under the Seleucids, her territory extended to Kadesh in Galilee and Carmel.

Ezekiel's prophecies on Tyre possess great literary power and variety. Tyre, like Egypt, struck his imagination; he fancied that he saw all the cosmopolitan grandeur of Tyre falling into the hungry waves of the sea which had been her strength and pride. This forecast, however, was not fulfilled (see note on xxix. 18 and Introd., p. 22), as Ezekiel later on acknowledged. The form of

day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto
2 me, saying, Son of man, because that Tyre hath said
against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken *that was* the gate
of the peoples; she is turned unto me: I shall be
3 replenished, now that she is laid waste: therefore thus
saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against thee, O Tyre,
and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as

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the prophecy is almost entirely poetical, the rhythm being most sustained and elaborate in the 'ship' simile in chap. xxvii. The whole passage has prefixed to it the date 586 B. C., the year of Jerusalem's fall; it is written, apparently, shortly before the beginning of the siege of Tyre. The 'supplementary' prophecy in chap. xxix is dated 570 B. C. Ezekiel's hatred of Tyre had a double basis. With his intense antipathy to commerce and luxury, he naturally hated the nation which stood for both in the ancient world—the pride of Tyre was essentially impious. As one of the most determined opponents of Nebuchadnezzar, and the instigator of revolt in Palestine, Tyre was to him the opponent of Yahweh's will. See Rawlinson's *Phoenicia*, chap. ix.

As the concrete type of irreligious commercialism, the 'world,' as it is often called in the Johannine writings, 'Babylon' in Rev. xvii, xviii constantly reminds the reader of Ezekiel's picture of Tyre. The biblical spirit is strikingly illustrated in Ruskin's words (*Stones of Venice*, i. 1): 'We read (the prophecies) as a lovely song, and close our ears to the sternness of their warning; for the very depth of the fall of Tyre has blinded us to its reality, and we forget, as we watch the bleaching of the rocks between the sunshine and the sea, that they were once "as in Eden, the Garden of God."' Cf. also Newman's lines in *Lyra Apostolica*.

1. the eleventh year: cf. Jer. lii. 6, 12. The month is wanting. From the coincidence of the year of this prophecy with that of the arrival of the news that Jerusalem had fallen, however, we may gather that this event suggested to Ezekiel the fall of the mighty city of the seas. As he learns of Jerusalem's fall in the tenth month (xxxiii. 21 note), this prophecy will presumably date from the end of the year, i. e. March 585.

2. Aha: cf. xxv. 3. Judah was the gate through which the produce of the south would reach Tyre. Solomon's wealth was due, it would seem, in large measure to his commercial alliance with Tyre.

3. many nations, in the train of Nebuchadnezzar; see verse 7.

the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall 4
destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I
will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare
rock. She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in 5
the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the
Lord GOD: and she shall become a spoil to the nations.
And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain 6
with the sword: and they shall know that I am the LORD.
For thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring upon 7
Tyre Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, king of kings,
from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with
horsemen, and a company, and much people. He shall 8
slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he
shall make forts against thee, and cast up a mount against
thee, and raise up the buckler against thee. And he 9
shall set his battering engines against thy walls, and with
his axes he shall break down thy towers. By reason of 10

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the sea. All through these chapters the prophet seems to hear the waves beating upon the doomed city.

4. I will also scrape: by some convulsion of nature; earthquake and inundation were not unknown in Tyre.

5. Cf. xlvii. 10.

6. daughters: dependent towns on the mainland—like Mestre, Verona, &c., under Venice. Cf. xvi. 46.

7. Nebuchadrezzar: the correct form of the name (Babylonian) *Nabu-kudurri-uçur*, 'may Nebo protect my labour'. The spelling with *n* instead of *r* only occurs in the later Hebrew books.

from the north: the road from Babylon would approach Tyre *via* Riblah (where Nebuchadnezzar's head quarters were), NNE. of Tyre.

8. forts. Assyrian and Babylonian monuments are full of the elaborate siege operations which made their armies the terror of walled cities. The *buckler* is probably not what the Romans called the 'tortoise,' a penthouse of locked shields used by the assailants of a wall or gate; but a large wicker shield, such as is represented in pictures of sieges. Nebuchadnezzar, unlike Alexander, had no fleet.

the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wagons, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a
11 breach. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people with the sword, and the pillars of thy strength shall go down to the ground.
12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the
13 waters. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease;
14 and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee a bare rock: thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.
15 Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyre: Shall not the isles

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10. horses would be as strange in Tyre as in Venice. For the description of a Chaldaean siege, cf. xxiii. 24.

11. pillars: Herodotus (ii. 44) says that Melkarth was honoured with two pillars in Tyre. The pillar or obelisk was characteristic of Semitic worship: cf. 'Jachin and Boaz,' 1 Kings vii. 21, and Ezek. xl. 49, xlii. 6.

14. Ezekiel evidently expects the complete overthrow of Tyre; and Nebuchadnezzar's power and determination certainly made this seem far from improbable. The author of Isa. xxiii. 15 predicts the restoration of Tyre after seventy years.

xxvi. 15-21. The prophet now sees the ruin of the city and the consternation of the countries with which she had traded, and he pictures her descent into the underworld. The first of these subjects is elaborated with astonishing detail in chap. xxvii.

Kraetzschmar has suggested that verses 19-21 should immediately follow verse 6, and precede the account of Nebuchadnezzar's siege; but there is no real opposition between the two; the act of Yahweh is regarded as the final statement of the fate inflicted by the king of Babylon. The theory of Manchot, that verses 7-14 refer to the siege of Tyre by Antigonus, 315-313 B. C., illustrates the danger of purely documentary criticism.

15. isles: the coast and maritime states, which are here re-

shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded groan,
when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then 16
all the princes of the sea shall come down from
their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and strip off their
broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with
trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall
tremble every moment, and be astonished at thee. And 17
they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee,
How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring
men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she
and her inhabitants, which caused their terror to be on all
that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of 18
thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be dis-
mayed at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord GOD: 19
When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities
that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep
upon thee, and the great waters shall cover thee; then 20
will I bring thee down with them that descend into the
pit, to the people of old time, and will make thee to dwell
in the nether parts of the earth, in the places that are
desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that
thou be not inhabited; and I will set glory in the land

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garded as in full sympathy with Tyre, as they were united to her by close commercial ties. In the second part of Isaiah the 'isles' are the coast-lands in the west, little known to the non-maritime Hebrews till after the exile.

17. How: the usual word for the beginning of a lamentation: cf. Lam. i. 1. The 'Qinah' metre is clear in these two verses.

19. the deep: the vast ocean, out of which the land had risen, and which was again to engulf it. The word is connected with the Babylonian Tiamat, the name of the monster whose slaughter is narrated in the creation-tablets.

20. The whole city is to descend to the underworld, 'Sheol,' which is here, as in chap. xxxii, regarded as the home of departed nations rather than merely of individuals. See p. 245.

I will set glory: this is certainly wrong; nor is the marginal

21 of the living: I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be
no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never
be found again, saith the Lord GOD.

27 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
2 And thou, son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre;
3 and say unto Tyre, O thou that dwellest at the entry of
the sea, which art the merchant of the peoples unto many
isles, thus saith the Lord GOD: Thou, O Tyre, hast said,
4 I am perfect in beauty. Thy borders are in the heart of
5 the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They

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insertion of the negative any improvement. A slight alteration, suggested also by the LXX, would give 'so that thou shalt not remain in the land of the living.' In the Assyrian Ishtar-Epos, the underworld is described as 'the region of those whose bread is dust, whose food is mud, who see not the light, who dwell in darkness, and who are clothed like birds in apparel of feathers.'

xxvii. This chapter contains two separate sections, the figure of the shipwreck of Tyre, and a remarkably full catalogue of the city's commerce; the second (9^b–25) is wedged in between the two halves of the first, its insertion being apparently suggested by the description of the furnishing of the ship. The rhythm of the 'ship' passages is in the 'Qinah' throughout, and broken by the catalogue; on the other hand, as both Davidson and Kraetzschmar feel, the catalogue, containing the wares with which the nations lade the ship, is not out of place, and is quite in Ezekiel's manner. The allegory shows great literary skill; but there is not a word which helps us to picture what Tyre was like; rising right out of the sea, she must have been almost as impressive as Venice. The catalogue is one of our best sources for the commerce of Phoenicia, and shows that Ezekiel possessed a remarkably detailed knowledge of Tyre, as of Egypt. See Map.

1. The word of the LORD: the 'lament' is attributed to the direct inspiration of Yahweh, as is the sword-song (chap. xxi) and also the dirge over the princes of Judah (chap. xix).

3. entry. Hebrew as R. V. marg. has the plural—either as the point both of arrival and of departure, or as having two harbours, named the 'Sidonian' and the 'Egyptian.'

I am perfect in beauty. Wellhausen conjectured 'I am a ship' as introducing the allegory; but the comparison is Ezekiel's, the triumphant pride is Tyre's.

4. The 'vase of Aristonothos,' supposed to belong to the seventh

have made all thy planks of fir trees from Senir: they
have taken cedars from Lebanon to make a mast for thee.
Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; they 6
have made thy benches of ivory inlaid in boxwood, from
the isles of Kittim. Of fine linen with broidered work 7
from Egypt was thy sail, that it might be to thee for an
ensign; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was
thine awning. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad 8
were thy rowers: thy wise men, O Tyre, were in thee,
they were thy pilots. The ancients of Gebal and the 9
wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships
of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy

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century, depicts two ships with armed warriors standing on the decks while the rowers sit beneath; a century after this prophecy was delivered the battle of Salamis was fought.

5. fir trees should be 'cypresses.'

Senir, the Amorite name for Hermon (Deut. iii. 9).

6. Bashan, the open country east of the Jordan, famous for its large trees and its pasture land.

benches, as R. V. marg., 'deck,' to which also the description seems more applicable.

Kittim, here used for Cyprus, where was the Phoenician colony Kittim. Horace speaks of 'Cyprian beams' for ships.

7. The sail itself served as an ensign, flags not being used on the ancient ship, which generally had one sail and one mast. The word rendered awning should perhaps be 'cabin' (Davidson and Toy), or simply 'deck.'

Elishah. Greece, Sicily, and Italy have been suggested for this locality. Dido's other name, Elissa, would suggest Carthage, or perhaps, more generally, the North African coast-land. Racial and commercial ties between Carthage and Tyre were close.

8. Zidon was now the vassal of Tyre.

Arvad is an island town founded by Sidonian fugitives, north of Tripoli, now *Ruwâd.*

9. ancients, parallel to 'wise men' in verse 8. The councillors of Tyre itself and of the allied cities are summoned to guide the fortunes of the mighty vessel.

Gebal is the Greek Byblos, between Tripoli and Beirout.

With the second clause of this verse begins the catalogue of Tyre's commerce, introduced by a list of her mercenaries (verses 10, 11). The figure is abruptly dropped; instead of the wise men

10 merchandise. Persia and Lud and Put were in thine
army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet
11 in thee; they set forth thy comeliness. The men of
Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about,
and the Gammadim were in thy towers: they hanged
their shields upon thy walls round about; they have
12 perfected thy beauty. Tarshish was thy merchant by
reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches; with
silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded for thy wares.

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being in the ship, we now have the ships of all lands in the harbour of Tyre. The effect in the following verses is very similar to that of some of Whitman's boldest 'catalogue' passages. Cf. also the list of ships in the second book of the *Iliad*.

occupy: cf. verse 27 (R. V. marg., 'exchange'). Cf. Luke xix. 13 (A. V.), 'occupy till I come,' i. e. trade.

10. Persia is here first mentioned in the O. T.; difficulty has been felt in Tyre's obtaining mercenaries from what was still an obscure tribe far to the east; but it is hardly safe to alter Persia to Cush (Ethiopia), with Toy. Others have suggested a tribe of Pharusii, in North Africa. Lud and Put are often mentioned together, but in Gen. x (with which this list has distinct affinities) Lud is Semitic and Put Hamitic (the Persians belonged to the Aryan stock); Lud would most naturally be identified with the Lydians, who also appear as Egyptian auxiliaries, though the Lubdi, a people situated between the Upper Tigris and the Euphrates, have been suggested. Put appears in Egyptian as Punt, on the western coast of the Red Sea. In any case, the three names would suggest distant barbarians.

in thee, on thy walls: cf. verse 11.

11. with thine army. The Hebrew reads 'and thine army'; a second proper name is required; Cilicia and Chalcis have been suggested; the alteration would be easy.

Gammadim. As alternatives for this name 'Cimmerians' (Cappadocians) and 'also the Medes' have been offered; but a tribe of this name existed in Southern Phoenicia; LXX reads 'guards.'

12. With this verse begins the actual list of articles of trade. Productions of Tyre itself are not referred to. Tarshish is probably a mining region in Southern Spain; it stands for the farthest west as Gog for the farthest north; its 'riches' are naturally metals (cf. Jer. x. 9); a 'ship of Tarshish' will thus be a ship equal to the long voyage down the Mediterranean, as we speak of an 'East Indiaman.'

Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy traffickers: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass for thy merchandise. They of the house of Togarmah traded for thy wares with horses and war-horses and mules. The men of Dedan were thy traffickers: many isles were the mart of thine hand: they brought thee in exchange horns of ivory and ebony. Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of thy handyworks: they traded for thy wares with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and rubies. Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy traffickers: they traded for thy merchandise wheat of Minnith, and pannag, and honey, and oil, and

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Javan: named with Tubal and Meshech in Gen. x. 2. The name is the Hebrew form for Ionians, standing for the Greeks of Asia Minor and the islands, known in the East long before the inhabitants of Greece proper.

Tubal: the Tibarenes, dwelling from the Black Sea to Cilicia; Sargon gave a daughter of his to their king. In xxxviii. 2, Gog is prince of Meshech and Tubal.

Meshech: the Moschi, east of 'Tubal.' Their territory is still rich in copper. This reference to the slave trade is noteworthy: cf. Rev. xviii. 13.

brass, the Hebrew word, which appears in the name 'Nehushton' (2 Kings xviii. 4), means copper and also bronze (the alloy of copper and tin), used in the East earlier than iron. Brass (the alloy of copper and zinc) was not known in antiquity.

14. Togarmah is Armenia, which Herodotus notes as being rich in horses and mules (I. 194). The two words for horses denote draught-horses and riding-horses.

15. Dedan: also mentioned in verse 19. Why twice? LXX, with a small change, reads 'Rhodes.' For Dedan, see note on xxv. 13.

16. Syria is referred to again in verse 18 (Damascus); hence the reading suggested by the LXX, 'Edom,' may be right.

coral should probably be pearls; corals were brought from the Persian Gulf, pearls from the Indian Ocean. The Greek translators had lost the key both to this word and to that used for 'rubies.'

17. In this general survey of world commerce Judah and Israel take their place (an unimportant one) with other nations.

Minnith is an Ammonite town mentioned in Judith xi. 3.

18 balm. Damascus was thy merchant for the multitude of
thy handyworks, by reason of the multitude of all kinds
of riches; with the wine of Helbon, and white wool.
19 Vedan and Javan traded with yarn for thy wares: bright
iron, cassia, and calamus, were among thy merchandise.
20 Dedan was thy trafficker in precious cloths for riding.
21 Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they were the
merchants of thy hand; in lambs, and rams, and goats,
22 in these were they thy merchants. The traffickers of
Sheba and Raamah, they were thy traffickers: they traded
for thy wares with chief of all spices, and with all precious

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pannag is unknown. Honey and oil are constantly mentioned as characteristic products of Palestine. Gilead was famous for its mastick or balm.

18. Helbon: now Chalbun, nine miles north of Damascus in Anti-Lebanus; it is mentioned as a wine district in Assyrian lists. Persian kings drank no other wine, and the district is still famous as a wine centre.

19. Vedan: an unknown place; the letters of the word might mean 'and Dan'; but against this are both sense and syntax; Aden has been suggested, and also Waddan, a place near Medina. Most modern commentators hold that the text is corrupt; the LXX omits the word, which may have been inserted, by a scribal mistake, from 'Dedan' in verse 20.

Javan: already referred to in verse 13, and out of place in references to Palestine and Arabia; perhaps an error for 'wine,' or (Glaser) perhaps a Greek colony in Arabia.

yarn: the R. V. marg., 'from Uzal' is almost certainly right; Uzal (Gen. x. 27) is the old name for Sanaa, the chief town of Yemen in Southern Arabia; the articles mentioned in 19^b are all products of that region.

20. Dedan: see on verse 15, and xxv. 13.

21. Arabia: the nomads of the Eastern deserts. Kedar denotes the Ishmaelites of the Syrian-Arabian desert: cf. Jer. xlix. 28; also Gen. xxv. 13; Isa. xlii. 11.

22. In Gen. x. 7, Sheba, Raamah, and Havilah are mentioned together; perhaps 'traffickers' is an error for the last name. The Sabaeans were a powerful nation in South Arabia, whose remains have lately been brought to light. Their chief town was Mariaba, now Marib.

stones, and gold. Haran and Canneh and Eden, the 23
traffickers of Sheba, Asshur *and* Chilmad, were thy
traffickers. These were thy traffickers in choice wares, in 24
wrappings of blue and broidered work, and in chests of
rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar, among
thy merchandise. The ships of Tarshish were thy 25
caravans for thy merchandise: and thou wast replenished,
and made very glorious in the heart of the seas. Thy 26
rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind
hath broken thee in the heart of the seas. Thy riches, and 27
thy wares, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy
calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy

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23. Haran is the well-known town on the caravan route from Babylon to Syria, from which Abraham came.

Canneh is identified with Calneh (Gen. x. 10) in Northern Syria.

Eden (2 Kings xix. 12; Isa. xxxvii. 12) is the Assyrian Bit-Adini, on the middle Euphrates.

Sheba: a second mention of this region is strange; 'Sheba, Asshur' may be an error for 'the inhabitants of Asshur.' The power of Assyria had been decaying for a century; but Nineveh had only fallen twenty years since; and it is strange to find Assyria referred to so briefly, along with the unknown Chilmad; for Chilmad, however, 'all the Medes' should probably be read; with these the list comes to an end. Its order is roughly geographical (west, north, countries nearer the Mediterranean, Arabia, Northern Syria, and Mesopotamia). Both Egypt and Babylon are unmentioned, possibly because they could not well be represented as commercially dependent on Tyre; see note on next verse.

24. Several of these words are obscure; that which is translated 'wrappings' (R. V. marg. 'bales') is probably connected with the Greek 'chlamys' or cloak. 'Caravan' in seventeenth-century English means 'fleet of ships.': cf. Joshua vii. 21.

25. ships of Tarshish: see note on verse 12. This reference naturally closes the whole section, and reintroduces the figure of the noble ship, interrupted in verse 9, the effect of which is greatly enhanced by the description of Tyre's commercial magnificence.

26. Tyre's own adventurous greatness brings Nemesis upon her. For the east wind, dangerous in the Levant, cf. Ps. xlviii. 10.

men of war, that are in thee, with all thy company which
is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the heart of the seas
28 in the day of thy ruin. At the sound of the cry of thy
29 pilots the suburbs shall shake. And all that handle the
oar, the mariners, *and* all the pilots of the sea, shall come
30 down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land, and
shall cause their voice to be heard over thee, and shall cry
bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they
31 shall wallow themselves in the ashes: and they shall make
themselves bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth,
and they shall weep for thee in bitterness of soul with
32 bitter mourning. And in their wailing they shall take up
a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, *saying*, Who
is there like Tyre, like her that is brought to silence in
33 the midst of the sea? When thy wares went forth out of
the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didst enrich
the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches
34 and of thy merchandise. In the time that thou wast
broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, thy
merchandise and all thy company did fall in the midst of

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28. suburbs: properly, the word means common pasture-land; it is used in xlv. 2 and xlviii. 15 for the space round the temple and the land round the city; elsewhere (Lev. xxv. 34 and Num. xxxv. 2), for the land surrounding Levitical cities. This sense seems hardly applicable here. Jerome translates 'fleets'; probably Ezekiel uses the word, by analogy, for Tyre's dependent coast-lands.

29. After the shipwreck of Tyre the sailors themselves take refuge on the land.

30. Cf. xxvi. 16.

32. their wailing. The word as it stands is unintelligible and rhythmically superfluous; the LXX, with change of one vowel, reads, 'their sons shall take up a lamentation,' &c.

34. In the time that, &c. The Hebrew text is here grammatically indefensible; the R. V. marg. 'now thou art broken' is probably right.

thee. All the inhabitants of the isles are astonished at 35
thee, and their kings are horribly afraid, they are troubled
in their countenance. The merchants among the peoples 36
hiss at thee; thou art become a terror, and thou shalt
never be any more.

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 28
Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre, Thus saith the 2
Lord GOD: Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou
hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the
midst of the seas; yet thou art man, and not God, though
thou didst set thine heart as the heart of God: behold, 3
thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they
can hide from thee: by thy wisdom and by thine 4
understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast

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35. astonished: better, amazed or confounded: cf. Isa. lii. 14; they do not know what to 'make of' such a calamity. The merchants (verse 36), however, exult over the fall of their great rival.

36. terror: i. e. a terrifying example of destruction. This figure of the mighty and over-laden ship, proudly venturing out into the waters which are to be her ruin, is the most striking example in the Bible of the thought familiar to Hebrews and Greeks alike—that pride prepares the way for its own fall. The popular side of the belief is well illustrated in Herodotus's story of the ring of Polycrates (III. 39 ff.). The religious side finds its highest expression in the Magnificat.

xxviii. 1–10. Ezekiel now turns directly to the 'Prince of Tyre,' as representing the city's spirit of proud self-confidence, and foretells his miserable end. The fates of king and city are naturally regarded as closely connected. Cf. Dan. iv. 10 ff.

2. prince. Ithobaal II; his one great fault is that he thinks himself God. No reference is made, either in his case or 'Pharaoh's,' to what would lie outside Ezekiel's knowledge, viz. the king's private character. The words are not to be pressed literally; Semitic princes did not, like Alexander or the Caesars, regard themselves as divinities.

the midst of the seas. Cf. xxvii. 2.

3. Daniel: cf. xiv. 14. There, his piety is referred to as typical; here, his wisdom.

5 gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: by thy great
wisdom *and* by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches,
6 and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: there-
fore thus saith the Lord GOD: Because thou hast set
7 thine heart as the heart of God; therefore behold, I will
bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations:
and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of
8 thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They
shall bring thee down to the pit; and thou shalt die the
deaths of them that are slain, in the heart of the seas.
9 Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?
but thou art man, and not God, in the hand of him that
10 woundeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the
uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have
spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.
11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

8. Instead of living for ever, as a god, thou shalt die a sudden and violent death.

10. uncircumcised. The Phoenicians were in all probability circumcised; hence, 'thou shalt be like warriors who are left unwashed and are buried on the field of battle; and in the underworld thy lot will be no better than that of the despised outcasts.' Cf. xxxi. 18, xxxii. 19, xxxix. 11 ff. Ezekiel gives no direct regulations as to circumcision, yet it would naturally come to fresh importance (like the Sabbath) during the exile. See the two accounts of its institution, Exod. iv. 24; Joshua v. 2 ff.

xxviii. 11-19. In this elaborate lamentation (cf. xix. 1-9, xxvi. 17-18, xxvii. 32-33), in which the 'Qinah' rhythm is overheard throughout, though it cannot always be distinctly traced, Ezekiel refers to the tradition of a semi-divine being placed in the 'garden of the gods,' and subsequently expelled. Whether this tradition is purely Babylonian, or more generally Semitic, cannot be definitely decided; the colouring is Babylonian, but it seems improbable that Ezekiel should have made such a reference as this to an idea that was foreign to Israelite thought before the exile. Early Babylonian influence would account for its presence in Palestine long before the sixth century B. C. We can hardly doubt that this conception of a divine garden was present to the mind of the author of Gen. ii and iii; but there is no exact Babylonian equiva-

Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, 12
and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Thou
sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
Thou wast in Eden the garden of God; every precious 13
stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the
diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire,
the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workman-
ship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the

lent, either to the story of Eden and the fall, or to this passage in Ezekiel. The general idea has been traced by anthropologists to a primitive Semitic mythological story, now irrecoverable. In Gen. ii, iii it serves merely to form the groundwork for an account of the origin of sin which has nothing mythological about it; in Ezekiel it supplies a picturesque background for Yahweh's judgement on the prince (see note on verse 14).

12. sealest up the sum: these words are wholly obscure; the word for 'sum' may be borrowed from an Assyrian word signifying 'elaborate beauty,' and we may perhaps explain 'thou sealest' as meaning 'thou art the seal-ring,' or final mark of completion on beauty.

13. To assume that the prince was what he pretended to be makes his fall appear the more complete.

Eden the garden of God: cf. xxxi. 8, 9; to be distinguished from the Eden of xxvii. 23. In the epic of Gilgamesh the Babylonian Paradise is situated near the ancient head of the Persian Gulf, where the four rivers separately entered it. The account in Gen. ii. 10 seems to suggest a more northern locality.

every precious stone. This list should be compared with that of the twelve stones in the High Priests' breastplate in Exod. xxviii. 17-20, and the LXX translation of this passage. The Hebrew here contains only nine stones, with the addition of gold; as given in the LXX, the list is identical with that in Exod. xxviii, with the addition of silver and gold before the sixth stone. There is an echo of this verse in Rev. xxi. 19-20 (the foundations of the city). The Hebrew names of precious stones, as of colours, are vague and unscientific; the same stone, if of different colours, would have different names. The breastplate, like the Tyrian prince's 'covering,' preserves a good contrast of colour; the arrangement of the latter is

Green,	yellow,	red,
White and black,	green,	yellow,
White,	red,	blue.

thy tabrets, &c. These words probably refer to the setting of

14 day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou
wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I set thee,
so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou
hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.
15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou

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the 'covering' of stones, and to them should be referred the gold; Davidson suggests 'sockets and grooves,' Jahn 'with gold didst thou fill thy treasure houses and conical chambers.'

14. The text here is unfortunately in some confusion; conjectures are numerous. It seems fairly certain, however, that we should read '*with* the cherub (or cherubs) have I set thee on the holy mountain.' 'That covereth' (*sokek*) is generally given up as unintelligible. Hommel, however, by means of two Babylonian equivalents (*u-sukku* and *parakku*), connects it with the Hebrew word *parōketh*, which is used in Exod. xxxv. 12, xxxix. 34, &c., for the curtain over the holy place in the tabernacle; *sakak*, 'covering,' is also used in Exod. xxxv. 12, 15, 17 for the three screens of the tabernacle. Hence, 'the cherub that covers' would mean 'the cherub of the tabernacle,' or 'the cherub of the most holy place.' *Parraku* is used for 'what is most holy.' On the cherub, see notes on i. 28, x. 1. Winged figures (?' cherubs') are often found in Babylonian drawings connected with sacred trees; the cherub with whom the king associates seems the natural inhabitant and guardian of the holy mountain, or Paradise. There is no need to ask whether Ezekiel is referring to an earlier or later story than that on which Gen. iii. is founded; in the latter, each element is transformed, and the associate of the cherub, here identified with the prince of Tyre, becomes the primaeval man (with his wife), and the cherub is the angel who, subsequently to his expulsion, stands at the entrance of the garden, to prevent his return. Smend regards the cherub in the garden as an Indian conception; in some form the garden is familiar in many parts of Europe and Asia and elsewhere (Meru, Olympus, the Hesperides, Aralu, Asgard, &c.). For 'holy,' see Introd. p. 23. The fiery stones perhaps contain an allusion to aerolites. The mention of them enhances the supernatural splendours of the garden.

15. The king of Tyre is to be driven forth, like the favoured inhabitant of the garden. Cf. Isa. xiv. 12, where Gunkel interprets 'Lucifer son of the morning' as a proper name, a kind of Babylonian Phaethon, whose fall is parallel to the fall referred to here, or perhaps originally identical with it. So Etana, in the Babylonian myth, is tempted to fly to heaven by the eagle, till at last they are flung down to the pit. Cf. notes on xxxi. 8.

wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By 16
the multitude of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee
with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast
thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have
destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the
stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy 17
beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy
brightness: I have cast thee to the ground, I have laid thee
before kings, that they may behold thee. By the mul- 18
titude of thine iniquities, in the unrighteousness of thy
traffic, thou hast profaned thy sanctuaries; therefore have
I brought forth a fire from the midst of thee, it hath
devoured thee, and I have turned thee to ashes upon the
earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they 19
that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished at
thee: thou art become a terror, and thou shalt never be
any more.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 20, 21

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16. Ezekiel's deep-seated suspicion of commerce here causes him for a moment to drop the figure for a literal reference to Tyre.

O covering cherub. Here also there seems a mistake; it is not a question of the expulsion of the cherub, but of the prince. The LXX reads, 'and the cherub brought thee from the midst of the stones of fire.'

17. The figure is still further discarded, and, forgetting the prince, Ezekiel's thought reverts to the city itself.

18. profaned. This can only be as Israel had profaned the sanctuary of Yahweh, by using it for irreligious purposes. The LXX reads, 'I have profaned,' which is easier, but not therefore necessarily more correct.

19. Cf. xxvii. 35, 36. On the actual fate of Tyre, see notes on xxix. 17–20.

xxviii. 20–24. *On Sidon.* Sidon is to fall, with all who have grieved or oppressed Israel. No special sin of Sidon is mentioned in this brief oracle.

of man, set thy face toward Zidon, and prophesy against
22 it, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I
am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in
the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am
the LORD, when I shall have executed judgements in her,
23 and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her
pestilence and blood in her streets; and the wounded
shall fall in the midst of her, with the sword upon her on
every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD.
24 And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the
house of Israel, nor a grieving thorn of any that are round
about them, that did despite unto them; and they shall
know that I am the Lord GOD.
25 Thus saith the Lord GOD: When I shall have gathered
the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they
are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight
of the nations, then shall they dwell in their own land
26 which I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell
securely therein; yea, they shall build houses, and plant
vineyards, and shall dwell securely; when I have executed
judgements upon all those that do them despite round
about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD
their God.

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21. Sidon, twenty miles north of Tyre, was built, like Tyre, on a ledge of rock off the shore, and was the more prominent of the two cities till the twelfth century B. C.; she followed Tyre against Babylon (xxvii. 8), and was overrun by the Chaldaeans after the battle of Carchemish (605 B. C.), but became more important again after Tyre was humbled at the end of her long siege; she was burnt after a revolt against Artaxerxes Ochus in 351 B. C.; later, she became rapidly Hellenized, and was the home of a school of philosophy well known in the ancient world. Cf. 1 Kings xvi. 31; Mark iii. 8, vii. 24.

24. pricking: cf. Lev. xiii. 51; the analogy of Arabic would suggest the recrudescence of a wound.

xxviii. 25, 26. These verses really supply the reason for the

In the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, in the twelfth *day* **29**

whole section, chaps. xxv-xxxii. Ezekiel does not simply utter 'dooms' against his neighbours, as his predecessors had done; their fall is the first act in the manifestation of Yahweh's glory and the restoration of his people. But it is not the only act, as is clearly shown in chaps. xxxiv-xxxvii.

SECTION III. ORACLE AGAINST EGYPT (xxix-xxxii).

This orderly and chronological group of prophecies is referred to four separate dates, the first and probably the second preceding, and the third and fourth following, the oracle against Tyre. Thus the first two will be uttered before the fall of Jerusalem. In the midst is inserted a short oracle against Tyre, which is dated nearly seventeen years later. The section begins by a comprehensive threat of destruction against Pharaoh and his country, to be followed after forty years by restoration to a humbled and subservient national existence; then (after the above-mentioned insertion) the prophet breaks into an impassioned series of short 'doom-songs' over Egypt (reminding the reader of the Sword-song in xxi), in which he says nothing about restoration, and foretells her defeat by Nebuchadnezzar. He then, five months later, compares Pharaoh to a lofty world-shadowing tree, which is flung down into Sheol; nearly two years after, he again pictures the ruin of Pharaoh, under the figure of a mighty 'dragon in the seas'; and a fortnight after this, he completes the cycle in a marvellous picture of the entrance of Pharaoh and his army into the underworld, where lie all the vast hosts of the departed empires of the world in shame and contempt. A strangely close literary parallel to this 'dirge' over a doomed enemy will be found in Aeschylus' *Persae*.

Ezekiel's attitude to Egypt offers an interesting contrast to his attitude to Tyre. He gives no direct description of her political greatness, nor does he once clearly allude to the Egyptian bondage or the Red Sea; he refers briefly to the treacherous vacillation of her policy; but he exhausts his resources in figurative descriptions of her grandeur and her startling fall. To actual details of her contemporary history he makes no reference. After defeating Josiah at Megiddo, Necho had pushed on to the Euphrates, but was forced to retire, and suffered complete defeat at Carchemish (605 B. C.). Hophra, who gained the throne in 588 B. C., defeated Tyre and took Sidon, and appears to have been for a time supreme in Lebanon; he is then found in Southern Palestine, threatening the Chaldaean besiegers of Jerusalem, but to no purpose; and he surrenders Palestine without a struggle. Egypt does not, however, disappear from history like Nineveh and

of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2 Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt,
3 and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: speak,
and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against
thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth
in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is
4 mine own, and I have made it for myself. And I will

Babylon; she lingers on, ever sinking, under Persians and Ptolemies, until she becomes merely the granary of Rome. Her last sovereign, true to the old Egyptian character, proves a broken reed in the hand of Anthony at Actium, 31 B.C.: cf. verses 6, 7; Isa. xxx. 1-5; Jer. xlii. 14 ff.; Lam. iv. 17. 'Aegyptii, vana gens, et novandis quam gerendis aptior rebus' (Curtius iv. 1. 30).

As in the case of Tyre, Ezekiel's forecast is not literally borne out; but the prophet's main thought, that her pride and vacillation would reduce her to a condition of helpless impotence, and that her military prowess would be brought to an end, was certainly fulfilled. To find fault with details, or to ask whether the power of the Ptolemies did not falsify Ezekiel's predictions, would be a pedantic misunderstanding of the purpose of his prophecy.

xxix. 1-16. *The desolation and restoration of Egypt.*

1. Jan. 586 B.C. This is some seven months before the fall of Jerusalem; the date corresponds to the attack of the Chaldaeans on Egypt.

2. Pharaoh: Hophra, or Apries, who reigned from 588–570.

3. the great dragon. Pharaoh is here represented as filled by a similar pride to that of the prince of Tyre. He is figured as a crocodile. The crocodile was one of the many Egyptian objects of worship, and appears on Egyptian coins of the time of Augustus. Curiously enough, the Arabic term for crocodile is Far'un. Gunkel connects the 'dragon' here, and other references to Egypt as 'Rahab,' with the mythological story of a combat between a god and a chaos-monster (Tiamat); similar traces are to be found in Job vii. 32; Ps. xliv. 20, lxxxix. 10; Isa. xxvii. 1, li. 9, &c. The crocodile could hardly be represented, he thinks, as claiming to have created the Nile (verse 3). It is true that we have found an echo of mythology in chap. xxviii; but there is nothing in Gunkel's ingenious arguments which necessitates either in the mind of the writers or in the store of ideas from which they are supposed to draw, anything more than a poetical representation of the triumph of Yahweh over the rebellious forces of evil. Mythology has barely influenced the language, much less the thought.

put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales; and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, with all the fish of thy rivers which stick unto thy scales. And I will leave 5
thee *thrown* into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the earth and to the fowls of the heaven. And all the inhabitants of Egypt 6
shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took 7
hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and didst rend all their shoulders: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring 8
a sword upon thee, and will cut off from thee man and beast. And the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and 9
a waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it. Therefore behold, I am against thee, and against thy 10
rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from the tower of Seveneh even unto the

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4. Herodotus (ii. 70) refers to the capture of crocodiles with hooks. The reference to the fish sticking in its scales is an imaginative touch characteristic of Ezekiel's love for vivid detail.

The 'wilderness' is at once the battlefield on which Egypt will be defeated and the environment in which a crocodile must necessarily perish.

10. The 'tower' should be Migdol at the north-east corner of Egypt. Seveneh is Syene (Eg. 'Sun'), now Assouan, at the furthest south, on the frontier of Ethiopia; we must therefore read 'from Migdol to Syene.' A large quantity of Aramaic documents, relating to the affairs of Jewish families in Upper Egypt in the fifth century B.C., has recently been discovered at Assouan. See Introd., p. 16. This adds weight to the suggestion that 'Sinim' (Isa. xlix. 12) may be a misreading of Assouan.

11 border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it,
nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be
12 inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt
a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate,
and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be
a desolation forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians
among the nations, and will disperse them through the
13 countries. For thus saith the Lord GOD: At the end of
forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the peoples
14 whither they were scattered: and I will bring again the
captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the
land of Pathros, into the land of their birth; and they
15 shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of
the kingdoms; neither shall it any more lift itself up
above the nations: and I will diminish them, that they
16 shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no
more the confidence of the house of Israel, bringing
iniquity to remembrance, when they turn to look after
them: and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.
17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year,

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11. forty years: cf. iv. 6, where the captivity of Judah also is to last for a generation. Isaiah and Jeremiah both foretell a restoration for Egypt (Isa. xix. 24; Jer. xlvi. 26): cf. for future restorations of Tyre, Moab, &c., Isa. xix. 16 ff.; Jer. xlviii. 47, xlix. 6, 11, 39.

14. Egypt was a nation; not, like Tyre, a commercial city with wide connexions. Ezekiel could not imagine its ceasing to be; but it will no longer be in a position to harm or tempt Israel (verse 15).

Pathros, in the Thebaid in Upper Egypt, which Herodotus and Diodorus rightly hold to be the original seat of Egyptian rule; the first two dynasties had their seat at This, also in Upper Egypt.

16. Cf. note on xxi. 23. Every alliance with Egypt brings the headstrong folly of Israel into fresh prominence.

xxix. 17-21. *Addendum on the fate of Tyre.* This is Ezekiel's latest prophecy, dated Mar. 570 B. C., between one and two years

in the first *month*, in the first *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, 18
Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyre: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, from Tyre, for the service that he had served against it: therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: 19
Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt 20
as his recompence for which he served, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.

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later than chaps. xl–xlviii. What is its relation to the facts of history? Josephus recounts a siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar lasting thirteen years, but says nothing about its result; the silence of authorities on this point seems to imply that neither side had much to be proud of, which would be the case if Nebuchadnezzar had weakened Tyre, but not destroyed it. This Ezekiel also implies. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt in 568, a year after Amasis had deposed Hophra. Whether, when Ezekiel wrote, the siege of Tyre had been actually raised cannot be decided, and is of little moment. Ezekiel evidently saw that his former prophecy of 586 B.C. was mistaken, and he now expected the defeat, though not necessarily the utter destruction, of Egypt. The difference in detail is noticeable between these verses and the prophecy on Egypt seventeen years earlier.

18. Note the picturesqueness of the language. As Nebuchadnezzar had no fleet, the arm of the sea between Tyre and the mainland had to be filled up: hence, the bearing of burdens.

wages: another grim jest. He had hoped to make Tyre pay him and his army for their labour in attacking her, and he had to leave the city's treasures untouched; he must, therefore, look elsewhere. He finds what he requires by spoiling the guilty land of Egypt. The reference to Egypt explains the insertion of the prophecy at this particular point.

19. Under Amasis, if Herodotus may be trusted (ii. 172), Egypt enjoyed a fair measure of prosperity. Here also Ezekiel's anticipations were not literally fulfilled.

21 In that day will I cause an horn to bud forth unto the
house of Israel, and I will give thee the opening of the
mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I
am the LORD.

30 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son
of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD:
3 Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even
the day of the LORD is near, a day of clouds; it shall be
4 the time of the heathen. And a sword shall come upon
Egypt, and anguish shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain
shall fall in Egypt; and they shall take away her
multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

21. In that day: a reference to an indefinite future, common enough in Isa. i–xxxix, though strangely rare in Isa. xl–lxvi.

horn: a common expression for general prosperity.

the opening of the mouth: these are strange words, if we are to take them as Ezekiel's last prophecy. The dumbness of iii. 26 had been already removed (xxxiii. 22). Either we must regard the phrase as referring, in a quite general sense, to joy and thanksgiving, or the verse must be a fragment of some prophecy at least seventeen years earlier, and placed here when verses 17–20 were inserted in chap. xxix.

xxx. 1–19. *Destruction of Egypt: her allies, her populace, and her social and religious life.* Ezekiel seems here to be expecting a grand conflict between Egypt and Chaldaea. As a matter of fact, the Egyptian army gave up Palestine without striking a blow, and after its retreat was left unmolested. Egypt proved even more Egyptian than the prophet had anticipated.

2. Woe worth the day: 'worth' is derived from an Anglo-Saxon root meaning 'be,' and is cognate with the German 'werden.' 'The day' is properly in the dative case.

3. the day: in Amos (v. 18) 'the day' is the time of judgement on Yahweh's own people; often, in Isaiah and elsewhere, it is the time of deliverance (cf. xxix. 21 note); here, in a more definitely eschatological sense, it refers to God's final doom on the heathen world, of which Egypt is the representative. Cf. xxxviii, xxxix.

4. Ethiopia, or Cush (Gen. x. 6). The Ethiopians were auxiliaries of Egypt (Nah. iii. 9; Jer. xlvi. 9). The 'foundations' are the mercenaries who were now the chief support of Egypt: cf. Breasted, *History of Egypt,* chap. xxviii.

Ethiopia, and Put, and Lud, and all the mingled people, 5
and Cub, and the children of the land that is in league,
shall fall with them by the sword.

Thus saith the LORD: They also that uphold Egypt 6
shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down:
from the tower of Seveneh shall they fall in it by the
sword, saith the Lord GOD. And they shall be desolate 7
in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her
cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.
And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have 8
set a fire in Egypt, and all her helpers are destroyed. In 9
that day shall messengers go forth from before me in ships
to make the careless Ethiopians afraid; and there shall
be anguish upon them, as in the day of Egypt; for, lo,
it cometh.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will also make the mul- 10
titude of Egypt to cease, by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar
king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the 11

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5. Put, and Lud: see note on xxvii. 10.

mingled people: 'Arabians' should probably be read.

Cub, a name otherwise unknown; it would seem to be a mistake for either Lybians or Nubians.

the land that is in league, or, as R.V. marg., 'the land of the covenant'; this can hardly refer to some well-known territory of subjects or allies of Egypt, nor to Jews who had fled to Egypt; a slight change would give 'the sons of the Cerethites' (see xxv. 16). Jer. xxv. 20 mentions the 'mingled people,' Uz (is 'Cub' a mistake for this?), and then the Philistines.

6. tower of Seveneh: cf. note on xxix. 10.

9. Yahweh speaks as if he had come in person into Egypt, like another and more terrible Nebuchadnezzar. His envoys are to travel up the Nile—the most natural way to Upper Egypt (cf. Isa. xviii. 2). The word for 'ship' is said to be borrowed from the Egyptian. LXX reads instead 'in haste.' Cf. Verg. *Aen.* ii. 311 'iam proximus ardet Ucalegon.'

the day of Egypt: cf. verse 3.

10. multitude: cf. xxix. 19, the native population of Egypt, as distinguished from her *condottiere.*

terrible of the nations, shall be brought in to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt,
12 and fill the land with the slain. And I will make the rivers dry, and will sell the land into the hand of evil men; and I will make the land desolate, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it.
13 Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease from Noph; and there shall be no more a prince out of the land of Egypt:
14 and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set a fire in Zoan, and
15 will execute judgements in No. And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strong hold of Egypt; and I will cut off the
16 multitude of No. And I will set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall be in great anguish, and No shall be broken up:
17 and Noph *shall have* adversaries in the day-time. The

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12. The drying of the rivers and the desolation of the land means one and the same thing in Egypt.

13. Noph is Memphis, the capital of Lower Egypt, south of Cairo; Amasis had his capital there. Hophra, his predecessor, lived at Sais in the Delta. Memphis was the seat of the worship of Ptah and Apis. The word for 'images' (literally, as in R.V. marg., 'things of nought') is used nowhere else by Ezekiel.

14. A further example of Ezekiel's geographical knowledge. On Pathros, see note on xxix. 14; Zoan is Tanis or San, on the east bank of the second arm of the Nile (Cf. Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43; Num. xiii. 22). The twenty-first and twenty-third dynasties reigned here, and the city is also identified with Abaris, the seat of the Hyksos, or shepherd-monarchs, who were in power when Jacob entered Egypt. No is Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt. It was the seat of the worship of Amon (hence its Greek name, city of Zeus), whose priests had formerly possessed great influence: cf. Nah. iii. 8; Jer. xlvi. 25.

15. Sin is Pelusium, the garrison of the eastern frontier of Egypt, now buried in sand. LXX here suggests, by a very slight change of reading, Seveneh or Assouan (see xxix. 10); in which case 'Sin' in verse 15 should be altered also.

16. in the day-time: R.V. marg., 'all the day long'; the con-

young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword: and these *cities* shall go into captivity. At 18
Tehaphnehes also the day shall withdraw itself, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt, and the pride of her power shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity. Thus will 19
I execute judgements in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first 20
month, in the seventh *day* of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have 21
broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it hath not been bound up to apply *healing* medicines, to put a roller to bind it, that it be strong to hold the sword.

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struction is 'unnatural' (Davidson); an easy alteration would give 'Noph—its day is darkened.'

17. Aven is Heliopolis or On (Gen. xli. 45); in Lower Egypt again, north of Memphis. On is an Egyptian word for light, or the Sun; it was the centre of the worship of Ra, the god of the Sun.

Pi-beseth is Bubastis, now Tel-Basta, also in Lower Egypt ('Pi' stands for 'city' as in Pithom); the city of the goddess Bast. At Bubastis the sacred cats were mummied. Each of the places in this list would thus suggest to the prophet some special idolatry. For 'these *cities*' another proper name would have been expected.

18. Tehaphnehes: in Jer. xliii. 7, xliv. 1, Tahpanhes, or Daphne (Hdt. ii. 30. 107). Now, probably, Tel-el-Defenne, near the site of Pelusium, an important fortress. 'Yokes' is generally regarded as an error for 'sceptres.'

xxx. 20-26. *The defeat of Pharaoh in battle by Nebuchadnezzar.* This passage is dated March 586 B. C., four months before the fall of Jerusalem, and seems to refer directly to Egypt's attempt to relieve the beleaguered city (Jer. xxxiv. 7, xxxvii. 5). That this attempt came to nothing is to the two prophets a mercy rather than a disappointment; it was the beginning of the wished-for end of the long agony.

21. roller, or bandage; the cognate verb means to roll in swathes or swaddling clothes. The tense used implies that

22 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am
against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms,
the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause
23 the sword to fall out of his hand. And I will scatter the
Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them
24 through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms
of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand:
but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he shall groan
before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man.
25 And I will hold up the arms of the king of Babylon, and
the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know
that I am the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the
hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out
26 upon the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians
among the nations, and disperse them through the
countries; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

31 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third
month, in the first *day* of the month, that the word of the

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a serious blow has already been inflicted on the power of Egypt, which (verse 22) will be followed by others.

23. Cf. xxix. 12 and xxx. 26.

24. Nebuchadnezzar is only Yahweh's instrument; perhaps Ezekiel's deep conviction of this truth prevented his joining Babylon to the nations whom he denounces. For similar prophetic convictions with regard to Assyria and Cyrus, cf. Isa. x. 5 and xlv. 1.

25. This verse repeats verse 24, as verse 26 repeats verse 23. In the second half of the verse LXX reads what seems to be a repetition of xxix. 19.

xxxi. *The Downfall of the Mighty Cedar.* Two months after the definite predictions of chap. xxx. 20, and therefore only two months before the fall of the city, Ezekiel returns to his favourite device of a figurative doom-song, and instead of the dragon (chap. xxix), a cedar-tree is used as the emblem of the pride of Pharaoh (see xvii. 3, xix. 10). See note on xxviii. 1.

xxxi. 1–9. *The original grandeur of the king of Egypt.* The language here used might well have been true of Egypt in the days of her prosperity, notably under the earlier dynasties of the new

LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto 2
Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art
thou like in thy greatness? Behold, the Assyrian was 3
a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a
shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top
was among the thick boughs. The waters nourished 4
him, the deep made him to grow: her rivers ran round
about her plantation; and she sent out her channels unto
all the trees of the field. Therefore his stature was 5
exalted above all the trees of the field; and his boughs
were multiplied, and his branches became long by reason
of many waters, when he shot *them* forth. All the fowls 6
of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his
branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their
young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.
Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his 7
branches: for his root was by many waters. The cedars 8

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kingdom in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B. C.; but Ezekiel is plainly thinking, not of some historical golden age, but, as in the case of the prince of Tyre (xxviii. 11 ff.), of the contrast between an ideal past and the coming ruin.

2. Whom art thou like: i. e. thou canst be compared to none.

3. the Assyrian: verses 10 and 18 show conclusively that Pharaoh, and not the vanished Assyrian power, is the subject of the chapter. The addition of one letter gives us the word 'tallness,' which may also be understood as the name of a tree, the *Sherbin*. We may translate 'in tallness *thou wast* a cedar'; or regard 'tallness' itself as being a scribal error for some word signifying 'thou art like.'

4. The tree was large enough to force its roots beyond the surrounding canals to the great deep below. 'Her plantation' must mean 'the plantation nourished by the deep.' The last clause of the verse, if the text is correct, still refers to the deep, where we should have expected a reference to the cedar; by the 'deep,' however, Ezekiel appears to be idealizing the Nile, from which all Egypt's life was drawn: cf. verse 7.

6. The birds signify dependent peoples (cf. verse 12). A similar figure is used by Christ, Matt. xiii. 32.

in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the plane trees were not as his branches; nor was any tree in the garden of God like
9 unto him in his beauty. I made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.
10 Therefore thus said the Lord GOD: Because thou art exalted in stature, and he hath set his top among the
11 thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I will even deliver him into the hand of the mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven
12 him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the watercourses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth are gone

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8. the garden of God. This passage also has been supposed to show the influence of Babylonian mythology; a tree (possibly, it is suggested, the origin of the Tree of Life, in Gen. ii. 9) is often depicted on Babylonian cylinders, surrounded by attendant genii or divinities; such foreign influence, however, is no more necessary here than in the narrative of Paradise. Cf. note on xxviii. 13.

9. Yahweh claims as his own work what is elsewhere the result of the 'many waters.'

For the envy of the trees, compare the parables of Jotham (Judges ix. 8) and of Jehoash (2 Kings xiv. 9).

xxxi. 10-14. *The fall of the tree, and its significance.*

10. thou, the only instance of the second person in the chapter.

11. The text here is awkward, and appears to have been read differently by the LXX. The 'mighty one' is Nebuchadnezzar; 'for his wickedness' should be joined to 'deal'; 'I have driven him out' suits the allegory of xxviii. 13 ff. better than its present context.

12. Figure and literal description here run into one another as in a dissolving view.

are gone down. A small change would give 'have spread their wings'; for the repeated 'have left' a different verb may have stood originally; the LXX suggests 'and were dismayed.'

down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his 13
ruin all the fowls of the heaven shall dwell, and all the
beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: to the end 14
that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves
in their stature, neither set their top among the thick
boughs, nor that their mighty ones stand up in their
height, *even* all that drink water: for they are all delivered
unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst
of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: In the day when he went 15
down to hell I caused a mourning: I covered the deep
for him, and I restrained the rivers thereof, and the great
waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for
him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I 16
made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when
I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the
pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of

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13. A general warning, as is often inserted at the end of a Greek play, against boastfulness or self-confidence: cf. Ps. ii. 10. The 'trees by the waters' are other nations; 'thick boughs' should be translated 'clouds,' as R. V. marg.; 'their mighty ones' means 'the mighty ones among them,' i. e. 'among the nations'; 'all that drink water' refers to the proudest trees (cf. Ps. i. 3) or the nations (verse 16). In the second half of the verse the picture is left for the reality.

xxxi. 15–18. *The universal consternation at Pharaoh's fall.*

15. hell: as R. V. marg., Sheol, the abode of the dead; equivalent to 'the nether parts of the earth' in verses 14 and 16. See p. 245.

I covered: the word is not in the LXX; probably it should be omitted, as inserted from xxvi. 19; the clause would then read, 'I made the deep to mourn for him,' which improves the rhythm.

the trees of the field: the nations still existing, who dread a like fate for themselves.

16. the pit: i. e. the grave.

the trees of Eden: the other nations which are destroyed and in the grave. These are 'comforted' to find that even Pharaoh

Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the
17 nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell
with him unto them that be slain by the sword; yea, they
that were his arm, *that* dwelt under his shadow in the
midst of the nations.

18 To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness
among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought
down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the
earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised,
with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh
and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

32 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth
month, in the first *day* of the month, that the word of
2 the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up

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shares their fate. Cf. xiv. 23, xvi. 54, xxxii. 31; also xxxv. 14. For the expression 'of Eden,' cf. verses 8 and 9.

17. They also: the nations referred to in verse 16.

slain: lit. 'pierced,' a more graphic word. Cf. xxviii. 8, xxxii. 19.

his arm: LXX, altering a single vowel, reads 'seed'; but 'arm' is more suitable to the following clause; Pharaoh's allies and dependants (e. g. those mentioned in xxx. 5). 'His shadow' means the protection of his rule. Cf. Ps. xvii. 8, &c.

18. To whom art thou . . . like? Cf. verse 2.

the uncircumcised: circumcision was of great importance in Egypt. Joshua v. 9 implies that the Egyptians had taunted Israel with not being circumcised like themselves. But the reference here is probably wider. See note on xxviii. 10; and compare the use of the term in the following chapter.

xxxii. 1–16. A final dirge or rather 'doom-song' over Pharaoh, parallel to that over Tyre in xxviii. 11 ff. It is dated nearly two years after the preceding chapter, and therefore a year and a half after the fall of Jerusalem, when the vanity of Egypt's promises of help has become abundantly clear. The poetical form of the dirge is dropped after verse 2. Pharaoh is again compared to the crocodile, as in xxix. 2 ff.

1. twelfth year: Feb. 584. LXX reads 'eleventh,' thus bringing the chapter nearer in time to chap. xxxi. See note on xxxiii. 21.

a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou wast likened unto a young lion of the nations: yet art thou as a dragon in the seas; and thou brakest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers. Thus saith the Lord GOD: 3
I will spread out my net over thee with a company of many peoples; and they shall bring thee up in my net. And I will leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee 4
forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to settle upon thee, and I will satisfy the beasts of the whole earth with thee. And I will lay thy 5
flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. I will also water with thy blood the land where- 6
in thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the watercourses shall be full of thee. And when I shall 7
extinguish thee, I will cover the heaven, and make the

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2. lamentation: cf. verse 16, and xxvii. 2, xxviii. 12. In none of these passages is there the least sympathy for the fallen power.

a young lion. This particular comparison seems out of place here, by the side of what follows. Cornill emends the passage to 'a lion of the nations is upon thee,' &c.; i. e. Nebuchadnezzar. The error, if such it be, is as old as the LXX.

yet: Hebrew, 'and.' The words do not necessarily imply any contrast. Cf. Rev. xii. 15.

brakest forth, i. e. blowing water from thy nostrils; a further suggestion of the careless pride of the crocodile, as the following words suggest his brutal destructiveness.

4. Cf. xxix. 5. In 4 Esdras vi. 49, Leviathan is made food for all nations.

5. Cf. xxxi. 12. Ezekiel is perhaps thinking of the overflow of the Nile, which may have suggested the crocodile's being able to reach the hills before his death. Hophra had thought of cutting a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea; but his engineers told him that he would thereby flood the whole country.

6. wherein thou swimmest: the word here used occurs nowhere else; probably it means 'with what flows out from thee,' and 'thy blood' may then be an explanatory gloss; so LXX.

7. The day of judgement brings darkness: cf. xxx. 18, also Isa. xiii. 10; Joel ii. 10. Cf. Job ix. 13, xxvi. 12, where 'Rahab,'

stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and
8 the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights
of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness
9 upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD. I will also vex the
hearts of many peoples, when I shall bring thy destruction
among the nations, into the countries which thou hast
10 not known. Yea, I will make many peoples amazed at
thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee,
when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they
shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own
11 life, in the day of thy fall. For thus saith the Lord GOD:
The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.
12 By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude
to fall; the terrible of the nations are they all: and they
shall spoil the pride of Egypt, and all the multitude
13 thereof shall be destroyed. I will destroy also all the
beasts thereof from beside many waters; neither shall
the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of
14 beasts trouble them. Then will I make their waters
clear, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the
15 Lord GOD. When I shall make the land of Egypt

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elsewhere used for Egypt (Ps. li. 9, lxxxvii. 4), is spoken of as a monster, whose destruction displays the might of God.

9, 10. For the effect of the fall of Egypt on the nations, cf. verse 16 and xxxi. 15; compare also the effect of the fall of Tyre, xxvii. 29 ff.; the terror caused by Egypt's fall is to extend further than her previous influence or commerce.

9. For 'destruction' LXX reads 'captivity.'

10. my sword: explained in verse 11 as referring to Babylon.

13. Compare Pharaoh's dream, Gen. xli. 2; as a matter of fact, but few cattle are to be found actually by the river banks in Egypt.

14. The waters of the Nile will run clear, because the desolation of the land will have left no animals to trouble them. The Nile water is always turbid; this, to Ezekiel, was typical of the restless Egyptian policy.

desolate and waste, a land destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the LORD. This is the 16
lamentation wherewith they shall lament; the daughters of the nations shall lament therewith: for Egypt, and for all her multitude, shall they lament therewith, saith the Lord GOD.

It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth 17

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16. This lament is to be sung by the daughters—the wailing women—among the nations, since the desolation of the country will have left no natives of Egypt.

xxxii. 17–32. The foregoing prophecies of doom over Tyre and Egypt are now followed by a weird and Dantesque 'funeral march' over the whole heathen world. Pharaoh and his host descend in ignominy to Sheol, where they find all the nations of the past—Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom (not to be omitted here!), the princes of the north, and Sidon (seven in all; Tyre is not mentioned by name). In Sheol, the nations are thought of as dwelling together as units; there is no hint here of the independent existence of individuals beyond death (cf. the common expression 'gathered to his fathers'). The only distinction is between the 'uncircumcised' and the 'mighty' (verse 27); the former lie in the 'pit,' the latter in Sheol proper. It follows that no teaching as to the future state is to be derived from this passage. Ezekiel is making use of current conceptions, as in xxviii. 13 ff., and xxxi. 8, 9; we cannot therefore justifiably conclude that this chapter contains Ezekiel's own definite opinion about the future. Elsewhere in the O. T. Sheol is referred to as the seat of a shadowy continuation of existence after death, wherein any real communion with God is impossible (cf. Isa. xxxviii. 18; Ps. lxxxviii. 10, cxv. 17, &c.),—a purely neutral belief, which is gradually conquered by the religious conviction that communion with God cannot be brought to an end by merely physical death (cf. Job xix. 27; Ps. xvii. 5; Dan. xii. 2, &c.). The *Odyssey* (Book xii) contains a picture of Hades far more definite, from the point of view of individual existence, than Ezekiel's; but in Greece, where, save in the mysteries, the thought of a personal communion with God attained no importance, the survival of death was chiefly limited to renown (compare George Eliot's well-known lines), while in Judaism it advanced steadily to a personal resurrection (cf. Salmond, *Chris-*

day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto
18 me, saying, Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt,
and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the
famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with
19 them that go down into the pit. Whom dost thou pass
in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncir-
20 cumcised. They shall fall in the midst of them that are
slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw
21 her away and all her multitudes. The strong among the
mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with

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tian Doctrine of Immortality, p. xxxii; and J. A. Stewart, *Myths of Plato*, pp. 60 ff.; also A. Lods, *La Croyance à la Vie Future*).

As a dirge over the nations of antiquity nothing could be more striking than this passage. In the last 150 years all the great powers in Ezekiel's world, except one, had been successively flung down. No such disasters had ever been crowded into a similar period. Babylon herself, though Ezekiel seems not to have expected this, is shortly to fall with a like crash. These sixteen verses are the death-song of the world in which Israel had grown up; in the new world, which was to take its place, the nation of Israel was to be replaced by the church of Judaism. The passage is imitated in Isa. xiv: cf. Jer. xxv. 15–28; Isa. lxvi. 24.

17. The number of the month is again omitted (as in xxvi. 1); LXX reads '1st,' thus dating this section one and a half months after the date it gives for verses 1 ff.; probably '12th,' i. e. a fortnight after the preceding.

18. cast them down. The prophetic word is itself regarded as a force in the world: cf. xxxvii. 9; Jer. i. 10.

19. Cf. xxxi. 2, 18. For the 'uncircumcised,' see note on xxviii. 10. The pronouns change from masculine to feminine, singular to plural, as Ezekiel thinks of the king, the land, or the warriors: so in verses 22, 23.

20. The text is in some disorder, but it cannot be confidently restored. As it stands, the Egyptians are to be flung into the midst of the slain; Egypt is given over to destruction; the inhabitants of the underworld ('draw' is plural: cf. verse 25) are to hurry her to her final abode. For the whole verse the LXX simply reads, 'and all his multitude shall lie down.'

21. The strong among the mighty are the warriors who belong to the second or higher class, as opposed to the uncircumcised; they dwell in 'Sheol' (R. V. marg.), and speak to Egypt from thence (cf. verse 27). LXX translates by 'giants.'

them that help him: they are gone down, they lie still, even the uncircumcised, slain by the sword. Asshur is 22
there and all her company; his graves are round about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword: whose 23
graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living. There is Elam and all her multitude round 24
about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living, and have borne their shame with them that go down to the pit. They have set her a bed in the midst 25
of the slain with all her multitude; her graves are round

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them that help him. These words must be joined in sense with 'to him.' The LXX suggests, more picturesquely, as the actual words of the heroes: 'Before whom hast thou any precedence? Come down and make thy bed with the uncircumcised'; i. e. verse 19 is made to follow verse 21.

22. The first to be mentioned as inhabiting this 'inferno,' the 'pit,' is Asshur, the most destructive and pitiless of the ancient powers, as her own monuments clearly show (verse 23^b). Note the impressiveness of the repetition, which, however, the LXX omits. The king lies in the centre; round him are the graves of his warriors. So in verse 24.

24. Elam, originally a greater power than Babylon, had been made tributary by Assyria, c. 650 B. C. Here she is spoken of as an independent power; cf. Isa. xxi. 2, and xxii. 6; also Jer. xlix. 34. Elam lay on the highlands east of the Tigris valley: cf. Gen. xiv. 2.

their shame: because they too have no place with the nobler dead in Sheol.

25. her. This must refer to Elam, whose bed is made by her slain warriors in her midst. For this whole verse LXX reads simply, 'in the midst of the wounded.' But these repetitions have a special and surprising literary effectiveness; and it is far easier to suppose that Ezekiel intended this effect, and that the Greek translators failed to observe this, than that some scribe was led by a happy accident to make an improvement which had not occurred to Ezekiel. There would be no reason for adding these words as a mere gloss.

about her: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for their terror was caused in the land of the living, and they have borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that
26 be slain. There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude; her graves are round about her: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they caused their terror in
27 the land of the living. And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war, and have laid their swords under their heads, and their iniquities are upon their bones; for *they were* the terror of the
28 mighty in the land of the living. But thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie
29 with them that are slain by the sword. There is Edom, her kings and all her princes, which in their might are laid with them that are slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to

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26. Meshech and **Tubal**: see note on xxvii. 13.

27. These, too, have no place with the 'mighty.' 'Of the uncircumcised' should be 'of old time,' as the LXX reads. 'Uncircumcised' is the term used of the inhabitants of the 'pit.' The 'heroes' have gone down to Sheol in full armour, instead of being stripped of their weapons like the corpses of the defeated.

their iniquities. Nothing in the context suggests that the 'mighty' also are sinners, and are being punished in Sheol. Cornill suggests 'shields,' corresponding to 'weapons' and 'swords'; this change would complete the picture of the mighty and honourable dead. A scribe, not recognizing the picture, might have made the alteration to the present Hebrew text; but if Cornill's conjecture is thought too violent, we should probably refer the clause, like that which follows it, to Meshech and Tubal (cf. verse 26); in any case, no other reference is made in the passage to 'iniquities.'

28. Pharaoh is here addressed once more.

29. Edom: included here not so much for her political importance as for the hatred with which she was regarded; for her 'kings' and 'princes,' see Gen. xxxvi. 31 ff. See chap. xxxv.

the pit. There be the princes of the north, all of them, 30
and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the
slain; in the terror which they caused by their might
they are ashamed; and they lie uncircumcised with them
that are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with
them that go down to the pit. Pharaoh shall see them, 31
and shall be comforted over all his multitude: even
Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, saith the
Lord GOD. For I have put his terror in the land of the 32
living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircum-
cised, with them that are slain by the sword, even Pharaoh
and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son 33

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30. the princes of the north, from their position between Edom and Sidon, should be the chiefs of Syria (cf. 2 Kings viii. 7, &c., on Ben-hadad and Hazael).

31. shall be comforted: in xxxi. 16 the nations of the dead are 'comforted' over Pharaoh; here he is himself 'comforted' to find that his previous foes are in the 'pit' with himself. Cf. xiv. 23, xxxv. 14.

32. his terror: the R.V. marg. 'my' represents the margin in the Hebrew text. As Davidson points out, neither is in satisfactory accord with the context, though each could be paralleled from Ezekiel's thought elsewhere. Better, 'he put his terror'; Pharaoh is then set side by side with Asshur, Elam, and the others (verses 23–25, &c.), all of whom, feared when on earth, are now lying despised in the 'pit.' Ezekiel's condemnation is justified by history. However mighty the nations whose warriors are here crowded into the grave, they have left no such legacies as Greece, Rome, or even Babylon, nor could any doom more terrible be pronounced over a people than that it should be 'one with Nineveh and Tyre.' Contrast this 'world-judgement' with that of Matt. xxv. 31 ff.

DIVISION II. THE PURIFICATION OF ISRAEL (xxxiii–xxxix).

The actual reception of the news of the fall of Jerusalem (xxxiii. 21) marks the opening of a new activity on the part of Ezekiel. His mouth is 'opened.' In the months of suspense, while the city was being besieged, he has become assured of the ultimate

of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say

fate of the heathen; and when the news arrives, although the prophecy of chap. xxxii has not yet been delivered, he is aware of his new mission—to make ready his countrymen for that new era of restoration and unsoiled service for which all the disasters inside and outside Israel have only been a preparation. The chapters in which he discharges this duty contain his chief contribution to O. T. theology, and indeed form the closest link between that and the theology of the N. T. itself. After six years of opposition to all the aspirations of his people, he finds himself now in a position of authority which can only have been equalled by that of Isaiah after the great deliverance in 701 B. C. Sublimely undisturbed as he is by the fact that the Jews were still languishing in exile, the success of his first great prophecy turns his mind to the working out of the details of the second. The political disaster has only served to make possible a religious triumph. But the prophet's tone, though different, is still in one important respect the same. His analysis of Israel's state is far too deep to allow him to forget that the real foe is neither Babylon nor the rule of Zedekiah, but sin; and sin can only be got rid of by penitence; not until Purgatory has been passed through can Paradise be reached. Hence the sombreness of these chapters, in which only the attentive reader detects that the keynote has changed from the minor to the major.

The new division is prefaced by a fresh discussion of Ezekiel's old problem of responsibility, prophetic and general, in which the results of chaps. xiv and xviii are restated; in each case, the prophet ends not with doom, but with deliverance (xxxiii. 1–20). Then comes the arrival of the messenger from the captured city; and Ezekiel greets the news with no exultation, but by emphasizing the sin that must bring desolation, and with a reference, partly ironical, to the position he had hitherto held in the community (xxxiii. 21–33). Next, he turns again to the false prophets or shepherds (cf. chap. xi), but passes quietly from their richly-deserved fate to his first detailed prophecy of deliverance for the sheep (chap. xxxiv). This picture suggests another, the malignant desires of Edom; as these are disappointed, so Edom shall be for ever silenced (chap. xxxv). Despised as it had been, the land shall be purified, and the prophet, growing in positiveness and detail as he proceeds, predicts not only restoration but a new spirit, a new prosperity, and a new penitence—three gifts which flow from the pure grace of Yahweh (chap. xxxvi). As if his hearers found this too much to hope for, he supports it by an allegory and a formal prediction of restoration, Israel and Judah being reunited in humble and everlasting peace with God (chap. xxxvii). But is there in truth no more cause for fear? Yes; the

unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him for their watchman: if, when he seeth the sword 3 come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the

far-off barbarian hordes are still waiting to swoop upon the peaceful land; but they will be flung down in a destruction that will place the renown of Yahweh and the safety of his people beyond all danger; and Israel, with hearts purified afresh by this merciful and unmerited deliverance, will now have nothing more to shake them from their allegiance to Yahweh (chaps. xxxviii, xxxix).

Only one date is given in this division, in xxxiii. 21. The concluding division is dated twelve years later; these chapters were probably delivered at intervals through this period, but after 586 history, with the exiles, had ceased to move, and the question of the precise dates is quite immaterial; all we observe is, as in chaps. i–xxiv, a correspondence in order with the probable course of thought both in the prophet and his hearers.

Section I. Last Threatenings and First Promises (xxxiii. 1—xxxiv. 30).

xxxiii. 1–20. *Individual Responsibility, public and private.* Now, at last, the prophet's mouth is opened (see note on verse 22); but although he stands at the dawn of the new era, his language is the language of the previous years. See, for the first nine verses, iii. 16–21, xiv. 9–11; for the rest of the section, xiv. 1–8, xviii. 1–32. In each case the principles are the same; the only difference is in the atmosphere, or in the prophet's attitude to the principles. Previously, the prophet considers four cases—the wicked unwarned, and warned; the righteous sinning without warning and dying, and warned before sin and living. Here, the cases are simply of the wicked who sin, and who die after warning, and without warning. Previously (chap. xviii), the just man lives, his wicked son dies; the wicked man's just son lives; the repentant sinner also lives; the just man who sins dies. Here (stated three times over) the just man who sins dies; the sinner who repents lives. Before the purpose of the coming restoration can be understood, the responsibility of the individual and the relentless sequence of death upon sin and of life upon goodness must be reaffirmed still more clearly.

xxxiii. 1–9. *The Watchman*: cf. Jer. xxiii. 9–40.

2. the children of thy people. We hear no more of the 'rebellious house.'

3. the trumpet: cf. Amos iii. 6.

4 people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet,
and taketh not warning, if the sword come, and take him
5 away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard
the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his
blood shall be upon him: whereas if he had taken
6 warning he should have delivered his soul. But if the
watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet,
and the people be not warned, and the sword come, and
take any person from among them; he is taken away in
his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's
7 hand. So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman
unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my
8 mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say
unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die,
and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his
way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his
9 blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou
warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn
not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou
hast delivered thy soul.

10 And thou, son of man, say unto the house of Israel:
Thus ye speak, saying, Our transgressions and our sins
are upon us, and we pine away in them; how then

4. if the sword come. The sword, as one of Yahweh's four plagues (see xiv. 17), is spoken of as if it had an independent mission, like a pestilence or an angel.

6. Whether the prophet warns or not is left to him.

7. There is great dramatic force in this sudden application of the rule to the prophet; iii. 16-21 refers to the prophet himself throughout, chap. xiv is addressed to the false prophets. In any case, the preacher's responsibility for his clearer insight into God's purposes is as great as the hearer's for his knowledge of the prophetic word.

xxxiii. 10-20. *The Community.*

10. The exiles regard themselves as under the anger of Yahweh, pining away in unforgiven sin, and they further (verse

should we live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the 11
Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the
wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:
turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die,
O house of Israel? And thou, son of man, say unto the 12
children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous
shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression;
and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall
thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness:
neither shall he that is righteous be able to live thereby
in the day that he sinneth. When I say to the righteous, 13
that he shall surely live; if he trust to his righteousness,
and commit iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall
be remembered; but in his iniquity that he hath com-
mitted, therein shall he die. Again, when I say unto 14
the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his
sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked 15
restore the pledge, give again that he had taken by
robbery, walk in the statutes of life, committing no
iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of 16
his sins that he hath committed shall be remembered
against him: he hath done that which is lawful and

20: cf. xviii. 25, 29) accuse Yahweh of inconsistency. Ezekiel replies to both moods by his assertion of Yahweh's unalterable law; to 'justify' God is to receive the first intimations of hope. See also iv. 17; Lev. xxvi. 39; Deut. xxviii. 65.

11. Cf. xviii. 23. Ezekiel is of course thinking here of Israel. For what was happening at the time, and would soon be known to the exiles, cf. Jer. xl–xliv, and lii. 29, 30.

13, 14. God's law is more completely unchanging than his predictions. The latter may be baulked by men; the former, never.

15. The examples of goodness and evil are given much more fully in xviii. 6–9.

16. Cf. Ps. xxv. 7, lxxix. 8, cxxxvii. 7; Isa. lxiv. 9. How this forgetfulness, like so many other aspects of O.T. teaching, is possible,

17 right; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy
people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as
18 for them, their way is not equal. When the righteous
turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity,
19 he shall even die therein. And when the wicked turneth
from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and
20 right, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of the
Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, I will judge you
every one after his ways.

21 And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity,
in the tenth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, that
one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me,
22 saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of the LORD
had been upon me in the evening, afore he that was
escaped came; and he had opened my mouth, until he

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cannot be understood apart from the N.T. There we learn that sin is forgotten because in the acceptance of Christ by faith the old sinful personality ceases to be.

17. See note on verse 10.

xxxiii. 21-29. *The arrival of the news of the city's fall and the opening of the Prophet's mouth.*

21. the twelfth year. The city fell in the middle of the eleventh year. Could eighteen months have been necessary for the news to reach the exiles? Communications were frequent (cf. Jer. xxix). The LXX reads 'tenth year, twelfth month.' There can be little doubt that our text contains an error dependent on the date which is given in xxxii. 1, and that 'eleventh' should be read for 'twelfth'; i. e. Jan. 585.

22. the hand of the LORD: see note on i. 3, iii. 14; for the dumbness, see note on iii. 26. The text seems to imply that the dumbness was removed in the ecstasy that fell upon the prophet from the evening until the morning, and that then (? a second time) his mouth was opened. Presumably, verses 1-20 would be the substance of the prophet's evening discourse; in that case, however, we should have expected a mention of the removal of the dumbness in verse 1. A slight alteration would change 'until' to 'at the time when'; the night's ecstasy would then precede the accession of speech; and verses 1-20 will stand as a general introduction to the section.

came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb. And the word of the LORD 23
came unto me, saying, Son of man, they that inhabit 24
those waste places in the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance. Where- 25
fore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes unto your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? Ye 26
stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land? Thus shalt thou say unto them, 27
Thus saith the Lord GOD: As I live, surely they that are in the waste places shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the strong holds and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. And I will make 28
the land a desolation and an astonishment, and the pride of her power shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have 29
made the land a desolation and an astonishment, because of all their abominations which they have committed. And as for thee, son of man, the children of thy people 30

24. The reference will be to those who were left with Gedaliah (2 Kings xxv. 22). Few and desolate as they are, with amazing self-confidence they feel themselves many in comparison with Abraham.

25. Cf. xviii. 11; Lev. iii. 17.

28. Whatever be the grounds for hope, nothing is to be expected in the way of mitigation of the doom of the land; the real hope is centred in the exiled community, and rises from the city's fall. 'To have given free scope to the thoughts of prophecy is the historical significance of the destruction of the city and of the national state in 586' (Stade).

xxxiii. 30–33. *Hearers of the Word, and not Doers.*

30. These words may refer to the prophet's general position,

talk of thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word
31 that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their
32 heart goeth after their gain. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy
33 words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (behold, it cometh,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

34 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son

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as receiving private visits (cf. viii. 1, xiv. 1), or to his changed position after the news of verse 22 had roused a fresh interest; in any case, he feels now more deeply the need for an active repentance in the people, and their own unwillingness to do more than listen.

by the walls, i. e. in the shade.

31. much love. The word is the same as in verse 32 ('a song of love'), and means properly 'tenderness,' or 'love-passages.' LXX paraphrases to 'because a lie is in their mouth.'

32. Literally, 'thou art to them a love-song, a person with a pleasant voice,' &c. Ezekiel simply means that he receives the same kind of attention as a skilled musical performer, not that his addresses were delivered with any special aesthetic charm.

33. this: the general fulfilment of the prophecies (cf. verse 3), already partially fulfilled: cf. vii. 5. The pointing of the Hebrew text suggests a considerable pause before the parenthesis; 'and when it cometh—behold, it cometh!—then,' &c.

xxxiv. 1–19. *Yahweh, the Good Shepherd.* In this passage Ezekiel has in his mind the oppression of the whole people by tyrannical rulers, and the oppression of the weak or poor among the people by the strong. In the O. T. the two are seldom clearly distinguished. Each kind of oppression is to cease, as Yahweh himself intervenes to punish the guilty, and to do what they had neglected. The passage is elaborated from Jer. xxiii. 1–8, which is combined with the prophecy of the righteous branch (verse 5). The figure of the Shepherd, natural as it might seem, scarcely

of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, even to the shepherds, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the sheep? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with 3
the wool, ye kill the fatlings; but ye feed not the sheep. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye 4
healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with rigour have ye ruled over them. And they were scattered, because 5
there was no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, and were scattered. My sheep 6
wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my sheep were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and there was none that did search or seek *after them.* Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of 7
the LORD: As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely for- 8
asmuch as my sheep became a prey, and my sheep became meat to all the beasts of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for

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occurs before Jeremiah, though fairly common afterwards (1 Kings xxii. 17; Hos. xiii. 6; Jer. xiii. 17, xxiii. 1, xxv. 36, xxxi. 10, l. 19; Isa. xl. 11; Zech. x. 3, xiii. 7; Pss. xxiii, lxxiv. 1; John x). Cf. Matthew Arnold's Sonnet, 'The Good Shepherd with the Kid.' Milton has applied the imagery of the chapter to a selfish and worldly priesthood in *Lycidas.*

2. the shepherds: compare the frequent Homeric expression for the king, 'shepherd of the people.'

3. You have abused your rights, and forgotten your duties.

4. broken: that which has been violently bruised, or fractured. The 'lost' is that which has wandered completely away: cf. Luke xv. 4.

6. How different the tone here ('my sheep') from that of the earlier chapters. See also xx. 28.

8. my shepherds: LXX reads, rightly, '*the* shepherds'

my sheep, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not
9 my sheep; therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the
10 LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the sheep; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; and I will deliver my sheep from their mouth, that they
11 may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep,
12 and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been
13 scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited places of the
14 country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold, and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.
15 I myself will feed my sheep, and I will cause them to lie
16 down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will

10. The shepherds are here addressed as if they were themselves beasts of prey (cf. verse 5). Compare Jeremiah's attack on Jehoiachin (Jer. xxii. 24).

12. The LXX here differs from the Hebrew, and avoids the difficulty of the picture of the shepherd being in the midst of his sheep when the sheep are scattered. We may perhaps read, 'as the shepherd seeketh out his flock on the day when they are scattered,' &c.

13. Figure and reality again dovetail into one another.

strengthen that which was sick: and the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in judgement.
17 And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, as well the
18 rams as the he-goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have fed upon the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture? and to have drunk of the clear waters, but ye must foul the
19 residue with your feet? And as for my sheep, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet, and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them: Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and
21 the lean cattle. Because ye thrust with side and with shoulder, and push all the diseased with your horns, till

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16. destroy: LXX, with the Vulgate and Luther, by a change of 'd' to 'r,' reads 'guard.' But the thought is now passing from the shepherds to the sheep; of the latter, those who have misused their strength are to be punished like the former. Yahweh does not act like other shepherds, nor like the kings who favour the strong and rich.

in judgement: these words form a striking and effective parallel to 'destroy.' If we read 'guard,' 'in judgement' would have to be taken as meaning 'as is right and just.'

17. cattle: the word used refers comprehensively to animals in a flock, either sheep or goats. Cf. Deut. xiv. 4. For this general attack on the rich, cf. Amos v. 11 ff., vi. 1 ff., and James ii. 6 f., v. 1 ff. Ezekiel is still thinking of the old state of things in Judah, now passed away, even though the responsibility for it remains. The bulk of the inhabitants of Judah against whom he had spoken (cf. chaps. viii, ix, xi) would now be on their way to join the exiles.

18. A double wrong had been committed; the best food had been taken; what could not be used had been fouled.

xxxiv. 20–31. *The New Shepherd and the New Covenant.*

20. cattle: see on verse 17.

21. horns: either of rams or he-goats. However stern Ezekiel's portraiture of Yahweh has seemed, it is brutality and violence which rouses his wrath. Bertholet quotes Nietzsche: 'The lowly

22 ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my
flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will
23 judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one
shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my
servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their
24 shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my
servant David prince among them; I the LORD have
25 spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of

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are alone the good, the suffering are the only pious; for them alone is blessing: while you, the superior and powerful, are for ever the wicked and damned.' But those who are here condemned are not the strong simply, but the tyrannical; it is the morally fitting whose survival is thus secured. Cf. xvii. 24; Matt. v. 3, 5; Luke i. 51–53.

23. In place of the old shepherds, Yahweh will set up a new one; this is not really inconsistent with verses 11–15; since, to Ezekiel, the Messiah is not the instrument of salvation, but only God's 'vicar on earth' after the salvation is accomplished. When the flock is restored, 'my servant David' is to be placed in charge of it. The Messiah, indeed, plays a smaller part than in Isaiah or Jeremiah; Ezekiel thinks more of the kingdom than of the king. Cf. Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 189.

one shepherd: in contrast to the many oppressors, and with a reference, doubtless, to the union of the two kingdoms (cf. xxxvii. 16).

24. prince: the term regularly used in the last nine chapters (xliii. 9, xlv. 8, xlvi. 16); in the restored state, as the head of the civil community, he is subordinate to the priests. It would appear, however, that Ezekiel's thought has not yet advanced so far. To the Jewish mind, the distinction between Yahweh and his representative, as also that between one prince and a succession, or a 'house,' would not be so obvious as to us.

25. covenant of peace: cf. Hos. ii. 19. The denunciations of chap. xvi concluded with the promise of a new covenant (verses 60, 62). Cf. also xxxvii. 26, and Jer. xxxi. 31, 33; also Isa. xlii. 6, liv. 10. In old Semitic practice (Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 481) the victim was cut into two, in order that the parties to the covenant might stand between the portions and so enter into the victim's life; hence, the Hebrew (and Greek) phrase 'to *cut* a covenant.'

evil beasts: doubtless part of the figure, yet a real and literal dread: cf. xiv. 15.

peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke, and have delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the earth devour them; but they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up unto them a plantation for renown, and they shall be no more consumed with famine in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. And they shall know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. And ye my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.

26 27 28 29 30 31

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26. my hill: Zion. Contrast xxxiii. 28; in chap. xlvii the whole land is regarded as surrounding Jerusalem. In a dry land like Palestine the shower is the most significant symbol of blessing.

27. The oriental yoke consists of a cross-piece, into which are inserted four bars of wood, enclosing the necks of the oxen. To free these (note the change of figure) Yahweh will not wait to untie the thongs, but will break the bars.

29. plantation for renown: i. e. a planting which shall be renowned far and wide. LXX, by a slight change, reads 'of peace.'

30. Ezekiel here introduces a significant and gracious alteration into his formula 'they shall know that I am Yahweh.'

31. LXX omits 'are men,' which is probably a gloss, reading 'ye are my sheep.' Cf. Pss. lxxiv. 1, c. 3.

35 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me,
2 saying, Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and
3 prophesy against it, and say unto it, Thus saith the Lord
GOD: Behold, I am against thee, O mount Seir, and I
will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make
4 thee a desolation and an astonishment. I will lay thy cities
waste, and thou shalt be desolate; and thou shalt know
5 that I am the LORD. Because thou hast had a perpetual
enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the
power of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the
6 time of the iniquity of the end: therefore, as I live, saith
the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood

SECTION II. THE RESTORATION (xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 28).

xxxv. Ezekiel now turns to more immediately practical considerations. Chap. xxxiv suggests the question, 'How can this bright future be realized, if our old foes are still lying in wait for our weakness, and if the land itself is to remain in the desolation which has now fallen on it? And are not we, the people to whom these promises are given, plunged in exile, as hopeless as the grave itself?' The questions are answered one by one; whether they were actually asked by the people or not, they show that the prophet, after his mouth has been opened, is still in the closest touch with the people's thought, and sees clearly, now that the decisive blow has fallen, the need for the most vigorous encouragement.

2. mount Seir: on the east of the Arabah; here used for the whole region inhabited by Edom, whose name is not actually mentioned till verse 13. See notes on xxv. 12. This prophecy is not, however, a mere repetition of the former. Edom is naturally mentioned as the most prominent of the jealous kindred peoples which surrounded the Hebrews (cf. xxxvi. 5); and her fate is regarded here specifically from the point of view of the restoration of Israel. There is of course no thought of a possible salvation for Edom. Cf. Lam. iv. 22.

5. perpetual enmity. Cf. Amos i. 11.

iniquity of the end: properly (as R. V. marg.), the final punishment—the destruction of the city. The phrase has already occurred in xxi. 25.

6. Note the repetition of 'blood' here; the Hebrew word is *dām*; possibly an assonance with Edom is intended. The verse

shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue thee. Thus will I make mount 7
Seir an astonishment and a desolation; and I will cut off
from it him that passeth through and him that returneth.
And I will fill his mountains with his slain: in thy hills 8
and in thy valleys and in all thy watercourses shall they
fall that are slain with the sword. I will make thee 9
perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not be
inhabited: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.
Because thou hast said, These two nations and these 10
two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it;
whereas the LORD was there: therefore, as I live, saith 11
the Lord GOD, I will do according to thine anger, and
according to thine envy which thou hast shewed out of
thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known
among them, when I shall judge thee. And thou shalt 12
know that I the LORD have heard all thy blasphemies
which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel,
saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to

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contains what seem to be two expressions of the same idea; the LXX has only the second half of the verse. See Gen. ix. 6.

thou hast not hated: cf. xi. 8. Smend understands, less naturally, the negative as a question, and equivalent to 'surely thou hast hated blood,' i. e. thine own line, Israel.

9. ye shall know: the subject of the plural is found in the 'mountains' and 'hills' of Edom (verse 8).

10. These two nations: the northern and southern kingdoms. Edom had looked on the fall of Samaria, and then of Jerusalem, as her opportunity (cf. verse 12), forgetting that the land belonged to Yahweh; but though his people had been deported, he was himself still there, i.e. the land belonged to him. The seeming inconsistency between this verse and xi. 23 shows how little Ezekiel intended either representation to be taken literally.

11. among them: an easy change would give 'in the midst of thee'; so the LXX, &c.; but the present reading ('them' = Israel) is quite possible.

12. Since the 'mountains' are Yahweh's, usurpation is blasphemy.

13 devour. And ye have magnified yourselves against me
with your mouth, and have multiplied your words against
14 me: I have heard it. Thus saith the Lord GOD: When
the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.
15 As thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of the house
of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee:
thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Edom,
even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

36 And thou, son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of
Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of
2 the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because the
enemy hath said against you, Aha! and, The ancient
3 high places are ours in possession: therefore prophesy,

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14. To what universal rejoicing does this refer? Such an event seems ruled out by chaps. xxv–xxxii. The words might mean, however, as Davidson suggests, 'according to the rejoicing of the whole earth'; i. e. the earth will feel towards Edom as Edom has already felt towards Judah. The thought of the desolation of Edom, thus introduced, is developed in the following verses: cf. especially xxxvi. 5. Edom itself, in comparison even with Judah, was as a matter of fact a bare and desolate region.

xxxvi. 1–7. *Apostrophe of the Land now lying waste.*

1. There is no break at the end of the last chapter, and the connexion of thought is close. As Edom will be destroyed, so the destruction of Israel will be changed to glorious prosperity, and the pollution of the land (caused not only by her own sins, but by the presence of strangers such as Edom) will be cleansed. To Ezekiel the latter is as important as the former. The chapter is the brightest in the whole book.

mountains of Israel: repeated from xxxv. 12; the extraordinary passion of verses 1–7 is all the more noteworthy by the side of Ezekiel's previous denunciations of Israel itself. Compare the outburst in Ps. cxxxvii. 5–7.

2. high places: to the prophets these suggest idolatry; but in the mouth of the 'enemy' they are the hill-strongholds, which would naturally be crowned with shrines or altars; the word occurs in this sense in Mesha's inscription. They are 'ancient,' since in pre-Israelite times, as archaeology has revealed, they already existed as shrines, and probably often as fortresses also.

and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because, even because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the nations, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and the evil report of the people: therefore, ye 4
mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains and to the hills, to the watercourses and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the cities that are forsaken, which are become a prey and derision to the residue of the nations that are round about: therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: 5
Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the nations, and against all Edom, which have appointed my land unto themselves for a possession with the joy of all their heart, with despite of soul, to cast it out for a prey: therefore prophesy concerning the land 6
of Israel, and say unto the mountains and to the hills, to the watercourses and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: there- 7
fore thus saith the Lord GOD: I have lifted up mine hand, *saying,* Surely the heathen that are round about

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3. made you desolate. The Hebrew word is anomalous; possibly we should read 'panted after you.'

the residue, the 'flotsam and jetsam,' and especially Edom herself, left upon the ground after the flood of Babylonian invasion had retired.

4. The fullness of style reveals the heat of the prophet's feeling; cf. chap. 19. Note especially the repeated 'therefore.'

5. cast it out for a prey: the expression is strange, alike in Hebrew and English. The LXX suggests that the reading is mistaken; a small change would give 'to despoil it as their booty.'

6. the shame of the heathen: the contemptuousness of the derision of the heathen, and the pollution of their presence.

8 you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains
of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield
your fruit to my people Israel; for they are at hand to
9 come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto
10 you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply
men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it:
and the cities shall be inhabited, and the waste places
11 shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and
beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful: and I will
cause you to be inhabited after your former estate, and
will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings: and ye
12 shall know that I am the LORD. Yea, I will cause men
to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall
possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and
thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of children.
13 Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because they say unto you,
Thou *land* art a devourer of men, and hast been a bereaver

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xxxvi. 8–15. *The Return to the Land.*

8. at hand. The first intimation of a speedy return; Jeremiah had mentioned seventy years as the duration of absence. This passage reminds us of the second half of Isaiah. For the time—and just when the prospect is gloomiest—Ezekiel's wonted sombreness is completely cast aside.

9. for you: elsewhere, this preposition has a hostile sense.

10. all of it: the northern kingdom as well as the southern. Ezekiel will not have the completeness of the prophecy misunderstood.

11. increase and be fruitful: the promise of Gen. i. 22 and ix. 7. The LXX omits; but the insertion of the words here is a touch of genius.

12. Note the change from plural to singular.

bereave them of children: how had the land been as a wild beast (verse 13) to its inhabitants (cf. Num. xiii. 32)? Probably, by the wars and pestilences, for which, in the prophet's eyes, the people themselves were responsible. After 586 B.C. the language of verse 13 was natural enough to the exiles. The 'reproach of famine' (verse 30), though deserved, is no more to be endured by Israel, or by Yahweh.

of thy nation ; therefore thou shalt devour men no more, 14
neither bereave thy nation any more, saith the Lord GOD ;
neither will I let thee hear any more the shame of the 15
heathen, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the
peoples any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nation to
stumble any more, saith the Lord GOD.

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 16
Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own 17
land, they defiled it by their way and by their doings :
their way before me was as the uncleanness of a woman
in her separation. Wherefore I poured out my fury upon 18
them for the blood which they had poured out upon the
land, and because they had defiled it with their idols :

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xxxvi. 16-38. *The Inner Meaning of God's Dealings with His People.* Cf. xx. 39-44, and see Introd. p. 36. The punishment of Israel, inevitable if Yahweh was to be known as moral, made him, in the eyes of the nations, appear weak ; while to restore the people whom he had punished might make him appear equally weak (as being easily turned from his purpose) or equally non-moral. The prophet elevates the whole proceeding into the sphere of the religious by approaching it from the standpoint of purity, ceremonial and moral. The uncleanness of their sin was the real cause of their ejection ; that Yahweh's name might not thus be any longer dishonoured, he would freely forgive them and reinstate them in his land ; there he would purify them by the outpouring of his own spirit and surround them with new mercies : thus would they come to true penitence, and in their new estate his name would be glorified. Paul's order (Rom. vi–viii) is exactly the same—forgiveness, regeneration, the gift of the Spirit of God as the ruling power in the heart, and the new righteousness (see A. B. Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 343). Ezekiel is still thinking of the nation as a whole ; but the process holds entirely of the individual ; and here, as nowhere else, with equal completeness, the ceremonial is merged in the moral ; the religious embraces both. But even yet the love which is 'commended' to sinners is hidden from Ezekiel's eyes.

17. Cf. Jer. ii. 7 ; Isa. lxiv. 6. Ezekiel uses the strongest possible term for the filthiness of sin.

18. Cf. xvi. 36, xxiii. 37.

19 and I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and
20 according to their doings I judged them. And when they came unto the nations, whither they went, they profaned my holy name; in that men said of them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.
21 But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations, whither they went.
22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD: I do not *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name, which ye have profaned among
23 the nations, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their
24 eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into
25 your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and

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20. Sin is not only evil in itself, but it compels God to do what men are bound to misunderstand. God's name is profaned not only when his people sin, but when they force him to punish them. Cf. xx. 9, xxii. 16, xxxix. 7.

21. Characteristically, Ezekiel feels that it is God's own name, and not Israel, which God pities. What had Israel done to deserve such pity?

23. sanctify, i. e. make holy (cf. verse 22). The great act of reinstatement would make the heathen honour God's majesty, as the sufferings of Israel had made them despise it.

my . . . name, see Introd., p. 35.

25. To the Hebrew the worship of idols involved acts of both ritual and moral uncleanness; the idea of cleansing was thus common to both spheres. Antiquity was not wont to make a very clear distinction between symbol and reality. In Babylon, as in quite savage cults, ceremonial lustration by water is found. Cf. Zech. xiii. 1; Ps. li. 7; Num. viii. 7.

from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also 26
will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:
and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and
I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my 27
spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,
and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them. And ye 28
shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye
shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will 29
save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call
for the corn, and will multiply it, and lay no famine upon
you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and 30
the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no
more the reproach of famine among the nations. Then 31
shall ye remember your evil ways, and your doings that
were not good; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your
own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.
Not for your sake do I *this*, saith the Lord GOD, be it 32

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26. See note on xi. 19, of which this passage is an almost verbal reproduction. There the promise is followed by a threat; here, by a remarkable expansion, the reference to the spirit being elaborated in xxxvii. 1-14, which answers the natural question, 'How is this national conversion to be wrought?' It is only when the old bad nature has been removed that the blessings of restoration can be enjoyed.

27. my spirit: an element in the conversion not mentioned in xi. 20; the new 'breath' is to be nothing less than God's breath.

28. ye shall dwell: another promise that could not have been made in chap. xi. Ezekiel is still thinking of the nation; cf. Exod. xx. 12. Ezekiel here alone (not in xxxvii. 23) uses the longer form of the personal pronoun, which, however, is used in this phrase by other prophets, whom he must have had in mind (Hos. i. 9; Jer. xi. 4, xxx. 22).

31. In vi. 9 this self-loathing is predicted for the fragments of the nation which are scattered in exile. That repentance (as here) is brought about by renewed kindness is a psychological truth of great importance.

32. Cf. verse 22. If the gift of the 'new heart' is to be preserved, those who receive it must understand the evil of the

known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your
33 ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD: In
the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will
cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places
34 shall be builded. And the land that was desolate shall
be tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all
35 that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was
desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the
waste and desolate and ruined cities are fenced and
36 inhabited. Then the nations that are left round about
you shall know that I the LORD have builded the ruined
places, and planted that which was desolate: I the LORD
have spoken it, and I will do it.

37 Thus saith the Lord GOD: For this moreover will I be
inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I
38 will increase them with men like a flock. As the flock
for sacrifice, as the flock of Jerusalem in her appointed
feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of
men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

37 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he carried

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past. Cf. Charles Wesley's lines: 'Show me, as my soul can bear,
The depth of inbred sin.'

36. Again, Ezekiel is left far behind by Paul; cf. Rom. xi. 12.

37. This concluding promise would be specially appreciated by the exiles. The population after 586 B. C. would seem decimated; hence the prediction is added that the inhabitants shall be as numerous as the sheep which Ezekiel would remember as pressing upon one another on festival days when driven up for sacrifices: cf. Amos iv. 4, v. 22; Isa. i. 11, and 1 Chron. xxix. 21. The promise of future population is repeated in xxxvii. 26 and Zech. ii. 4.

xxxvii. 1–14. After the foregoing wide promise of restoration, the details of the central element in the process are seen in a vision, which offers a parallel and an equally striking contrast to Isa. liii. There, the Servant, afflicted with a leprous plague, is watched by those whose salvation is being won by his own sufferings and death, and, after death, he sees the travail of his soul;

me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones; and he 2
caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can 3
these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy over these 4
bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones: 5
Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up 6
flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath

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here, the prophet beholds the nation itself dead, as it were, in exile, and then, through the gift of the spirit already announced in xxxvi. 26, rising to new life. See Introd., p. 19. Dan. xii. 2 repeats the promise of a resurrection, but that chapter combines the predictions of Ezek. xxxvii with that of xxxviii and xxxix, and is contemplating the rise of those who had fallen martyrs in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes: cf. Rev. vii. 14. Ezekiel is not here considering the problem of Job or of Ps. lxxiii (which goes far beyond ordinary Judaism), viz., how can the suffering of the pious individual be explained? But literature offers no nobler picture of a national resurrection: cf. Isa. xxvi. 14, 19. The whole description is a marvel of combined brevity and vividness.

1. The hand of the LORD: cf. i. 3, iii. 14, viii. 1, and xl. 1. Here, as in the concluding vision, all reference to external signs of ecstasy or trance is absent. Contrast iv. 4.

he carried me out: cf. iii. 22. The bones of Gog also lie in the midst of a valley (xxxix. 11), which would be the natural site of a battle; cf. also Jer. xxxi. 40.

3. Yahweh does not answer his own question, but makes the prophet answer it, or rather bring about its answer.

4. The prophet is thus compelled to assume a potentiality of life in the unburied and dried-up bones.

5. The LXX reads simply, 'I will cause to enter into you the breath of life.' For 'breath' and 'spirit' the Hebrew uses one word; the whole passage is the direct reverse of the words Tennyson attributes to Nature—'The spirit does but mean the breath.'

in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am
7 the LORD. So I prophesied as I was commanded:
and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold an
earthquake, and the bones came together, bone to his
8 bone. And I beheld, and lo, there were sinews upon
them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above:
9 but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me,
Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say
to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Come from the
four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that
10 they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me,
and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood
11 up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said
unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of
Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and
12 our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy,

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7. a noise: *lit.* 'a voice'; its use in Ps. xxix has suggested the R.V. margin 'thundering.' 'Sound' would express the meaning better, since the word neither necessitates nor rules out the articulate. The LXX omits the word.

an earthquake: *lit.* 'a shaking,' used of chariots (Nah. iii. 2; Jer. xlvii. 3), of battle (Isa. ix. 4; Jer. x. 22), or of the brandishing of a spear (Job xli. 21), as well as of actual earthquake (1 Kings xix. 11; Amos i. 1). Here, of the sudden thrill which runs over the whole field of bones.

8. Ezekiel prepares the way for the description of the actual coming of the breath with distinct literary art.

9. wind: still the same word which in this chapter and elsewhere is translated 'breath' and 'spirit.' All the winds of heaven are needed to animate the army of the dead ('these slain').

10. Cf. xxxvi. 27. In Gen. ii. 7 Yahweh breathes his breath directly into man; here, the result is obtained through the prophet's summons to the breath, or wind, of the air; Yahweh refrains from direct action. Though the prophet feels himself an insignificant 'son of man' before God, he has the highest conception of the importance which God attaches to his office: cf. Rom. xi. 13.

11. For this quotation from popular speech, cf. xviii. 2, xxxiii. 17. For the exiles' depression, cf. xxxiii. 10.

12. Those who are thus to rise are already physically alive;

and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, 13 when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my 14 spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 15 And thou, son of man, take thee one stick, and write 16 upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions: and join them for thee one to 17 another into one stick, that they may become one in thine

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as the rest of the chapter shows, they are to be restored as a living nation (cf. verse 14). Ultimately, Ezekiel's faith rests on the same grounds as faith in an individual resurrection; God's purposes are too gracious and firm to be broken by national disaster or physical death. The exile begot both faiths, but the latter only arose when the former became impossible or unsatisfying.

your graves: your exile. In the vision there were no graves.

xxxvii. 15–28. The prophecy now culminates in the definite announcement of the reunion of the two kingdoms.

16. The division of the realm of David into two is regarded by the great prophets as a national calamity; but only after the exile was the action of the ten tribes felt to be schismatic. Before then 'Ephraim' (the leading tribe until the rise of David brought Judah into prominence) was regarded as pre-eminent in influence or in misfortune rather than in wickedness. Cf. xvi. 51. The constant use of the term 'Israel' shows how little the 'rejection' of Ephraim had entered into the mind of the prophets. Cf. Hos. ii. 2, iii. 5; Isa. xi. 13; Mic. ii. 12, iv. 7; Jer. iii. 11, xiii. 11; and Ezek. xlvii. 13.

stick: this symbolizes the royal 'rod' or 'sceptre' (cf. verse 19).

18 hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak
unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou
19 meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord
GOD: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in
the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his
companions; and I will put them with it, *even* with the
stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall
20 be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou
21 writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say
unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will
take the children of Israel from among the nations,
whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side,
22 and bring them into their own land: and I will make
them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of
Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and
they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be
23 divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall
they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor
with their detestable things, nor with any of their trans-
gressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling
places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them:
so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

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18. Cf. xii. 9.

19. in mine hand: LXX reads 'in the hand of Judah.' This does not correspond to verse 16; moreover, in spite of the mention of David in verse 24 and xxxiv. 23, Ezekiel nowhere gives Judah a special pre-eminence: he is 'a Pan-Israelite of the purest water' (Kraetzschmar). We should probably read, 'I will put them (Joseph and the tribes of Israel) upon the stick of Judah, and they shall be one stick in my hand.'

21. Cf. verse 14.

22. king: elsewhere Ezekiel avoids this term; here it expresses the majesty of the reunited kingdom. See note on vii. 27.

23. dwelling places: as R. V. margin and LXX, 'backslidings'. or 'rebelliousnesses' should be read.

And my servant David shall be king over them; and 24
they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in
my judgements, and observe my statutes, and do them.
And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto 25
Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they
shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their
children's children, for ever: and David my servant shall
be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a 26
covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting
covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply
them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for
evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and 27
I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And 28
the nations shall know that I am the LORD that sanctify
Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them
for evermore.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son **38**

24. Cf. notes on xxxiv. 23, xliii. 7. Members of Zedekiah's family may still have been alive (cf. Jer. xliii. 6), but the prophet pays no attention to them. 'David' means one who is like the son of Jesse in the principles of his government.

25. Jacob: the patriarch himself, not his descendants.

26. Cf. xxxiv. 25, xliii. 7.

27. tabernacle, i. e. dwelling-place.

28. God sets Israel apart, unpolluted, for himself, as is shown by Israel's cultus, and its possession of the visible sanctuary. This separation of Israel is itself a means of Yahweh's self-revelation to the nations.

SECTION III. THE FINAL DELIVERANCE (xxxviii. 1—xxxix. 29).

Chap. xxxvii would naturally lead on at once to the description of the new régime in Palestine; the neighbours of Israel (even Edom) are now powerless, and Israel herself is repentant and regenerated. But the preparation is not yet complete. The vast and mysterious forces of the world's barbarism must be destroyed before Israel's peace is unshakable. Ezekiel therefore describes an irruption of the hordes who range themselves under 'Gog'; these sweep upon Yahweh's land; they meet their destruction

of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the

there at his hand, and all that Israel has to do is to bury the multitudes of the slain. The 'Scythians' had invaded Western Asia in the time of Josiah (Herod. i. 73, 103–106: cf. Jer. i. 15), and the memory of these barbarians, as terrifying and destructive as the armies of Attila 'the scourge of God,' would be still fresh in Ezekiel's mind. A second and still more terrible invasion he regarded as already predicted (xxxviii. 19, xxxix. 8: cf. Jer. vi. 22). Whether he thought of this event as in the near or distant future is not clear (note, however, xxxviii. 8, 16); probably the question of the actual date was of as little importance to him as to the other prophets. The event, however, will be the final calamity, and the final revelation of Yahweh's supremacy to the world.

This passage is the first definite appearance in the O. T. of what is known as 'apocalyptic' (see Introd., p. 23). As prophecy proper passes into apocalyptic, the clearest details come to be found in its references, not to the present but to the future.

The idea of these chapters is developed in Daniel and in Rev. xx. 7–10, and in this last passage it has given rise to the conception of a millenium (cf. xxxviii. 8), an interval of a thousand years between the first appearance of Christ (which corresponds to the return to Palestine in chaps. xxxvi, xxxvii) and the invasion of the hosts of evil (the irruption of 'Gog'). Gunkel and Gressmann, referring to xxxviii. 17, &c., hold that the eschatology of the prophets presupposes an older popular eschatology—that the 'day of Yahweh' was originally thought of as the end of the world; then, by the earlier prophets, as Yahweh's judgement on his people (cf. note on xiii. 5), and, by Ezekiel and his successors, as the final world-judgement symbolized here by the destruction of Gog. Ezekiel, we know, was not uninfluenced by popular thought (cf. notes on chap. xxviii), but we cannot interpret prophetic thought by supposed conceptions of which we have no definite information. To a mind on fire with the conviction that Yahweh was bound ultimately to manifest his glory, the startling political transformations culminating in Ezekiel's age would easily suggest a final calamity and an enduring peace.

xxxviii. 1–13. *The Gathering of the Horde.*

2. Gog, of the land of Magog: cf. Rev. xx. 8, 'Gog and Magog.' Gog is regarded as already existing; but the name cannot be regarded as applied to the Chaldaeans (as Ewald suggested), since the whole description is of a savage horde, and the Chaldaeans themselves are nowhere thus attacked. The origin of the term Gog is uncertain; it is, however, mentioned in the Tel-el-Amarna letters as the unknown land in the north;

prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy
against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, 3
I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and
Tubal: and I will turn thee about, and put hooks into 4
thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army,
horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour,
a great company with buckler and shield, all of them
handling swords: Persia, Cush, and Put with them; all 5
of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his 6
hordes; the house of Togarmah in the uttermost parts
of the north, and all his hordes: even many peoples with
thee. Be thou prepared, yea, prepare thyself, thou, and 7
all thy companies that are assembled unto thee, and be
thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be 8

Haupt suggests that it is an appellative like *Great Mogul* or *Grand Turk*. 'Magog' (a land, not a person) is probably here a gloss, inserted from Gen. x. 2, where it would appear to be the result of a textual corruption.

Rosh: a word which in Hebrew means 'head'; hence R. V. marg., 'chief prince of Meshech.' If it is a proper name, the region is unknown. Dubious identifications have been suggested with 'Tiras' of Gen. x. 2, and with a mediaeval name for the ancestors of the Russians.

Meshech and Tubal: cf. note on xxvii. 13.

4. hooks: cf. xxix. 4. Here, Yahweh leads the host on their expedition; they do not need to be dragged (like Pharaoh in chap. xxix), except that they are really being led to their fate. LXX omits the words.

5. Cf. xxvii. 10, xxx. 5. Actual though far-off peoples from Asia Minor, Africa, South Arabia (the circle of Phoenician commerce) are here joined with the quasi-mythical Gog. In this respect Ezekiel differs noticeably from the Apocalypse.

6. Gomer (Gen. x. 2) is to be identified with the Cimmerians, a name for the Armenians (cf. Homer, *Odyssey* xi. 14). On Togarmah, see note on xxvii. 14.

7. a guard: LXX reads 'be to me a reserve,' which seems to be borne out by verse 8. A change of one letter gives the easier reading of R. V. marg., 'a commander.'

8. After many days, i. e. after Israel has for some time dwelt in peace.

visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land
that is brought back from the sword, that is gathered out
of many peoples, upon the mountains of Israel, which
have been a continual waste: but it is brought forth out
of the peoples, and they shall dwell securely, all of them.
9 And thou shalt ascend, thou shalt come like a storm,
thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all
10 thy hordes, and many peoples with thee. Thus saith the
Lord GOD: It shall come to pass in that day, that things
shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt devise an evil
11 device: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of
unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at quiet,
that dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls,
12 and having neither bars nor gates: to take the spoil and
to take the prey; to turn thine hand against the waste
places that are *now* inhabited, and against the people
that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten
cattle and goods, that dwell in the middle of the earth.

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visited, approached, not to be punished, but to be marshalled for the invasion of the land which has been restored from the desolation of war and exile. For the fullness of the expression, cf. xxxvi. 34-36.

9. Cf. Jer. iv. 13. How can it be just that Yahweh should himself lead the barbarians to a crime for which he destroys them? To the Hebrews, God is the ultimate cause of all things; if the savage comes, God must have brought him; if he is destroyed, God must have planned to destroy him. The dilemma is one from which modern theology has found no completely satisfactory escape; it can only affirm, with the O. T., that God's foreknowledge and causality do not annul man's responsibility. Cf. the following verse; the wild thoughts are Gog's.

11. without walls: hence in a time of deep peace. Cf. Jer. xlix. 31. There is no real inconsistency between this and xxxvi. 35 ('fenced').

12. cattle suggests the older ideal of an agricultural Israel.

middle (R. V. marg., 'navel'; cf. v. 5) denotes the high land forming the backbone of Palestine, on which Israel's hold had always been the strongest. The word occurs in Judges ix. 37.

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take the spoil? hast thou assembled thy company to take the prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take great spoil? 13

Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD: In that day when my people Israel dwelleth securely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the uttermost parts of the north, thou, and many peoples with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring thee against my land, that the nations may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord GOD: Art thou he of whom I spake in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days for *many* years that I would bring thee against them? 14 15 16 17

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13. Cf. notes on xxvii. 15, 22. Sheba &c., expect to get their advantage out of this huge raid. The 'great spoil' hints at the future prosperity of the country.

young lions must be wrong; 'jackals' would be more appropriate! One of the usual words for 'merchant' would hardly have been thus altered, as has been suggested; possibly a proper name (as 'Cyprians') originally stood in the text.

xxxviii. 14-23. *The Destruction of the Horde.*

14. know, probably, with LXX, 'be aroused.'

16. Since holiness is the special mark of divinity (see Introd., p. 24), we may paraphrase, with H. P. Smith, 'when I show my divinity before their eyes.' Cf. note on xxxvi. 20.

17. for many years: properly, 'years long'; the prophecies had been often repeated. To what does Ezekiel refer? Similar prophecies are found in Isa. xvii. 12; Mic. v. 11; Joel ii. 2; Zeph. iii. 8; Zech. xii. 3 ff.; none of which, however, are certainly pre-exilic. Jer. vi. 22 is more explicit, though this might easily be understood of the Chaldaeans. Possibly Ezekiel refers to a more

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, when Gog shall
come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that
19 my fury shall come up into my nostrils. For in my
jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely
in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of
20 Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the
heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping
things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are
upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence,
and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep
places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.
21 And I will call for a sword against him unto all my
mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall
22 be against his brother. And I will plead against him with
pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him,
and upon his hordes, and upon the many peoples that
are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones,
23 fire, and brimstone. And I will magnify myself, and
sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the
eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am
the LORD.

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widely spread expectation. He alone of O. T. prophets contains this double anticipation of mediate and final deliverance.

19. shaking: the same word was used in xxxvii. 7 (see note). The earthquake is a common element in apocalyptic pictures: cf. Hag. ii. 6; Matt. xxiv. 7.

21. a sword: 'sword' and 'my mountains' are very similar in Hebrew; and LXX, omitting both, reads another and not dissimilar word, 'terror,' which may be right; the 'terrors' are described in the following words. As the text stands, the foe has spread over the mountains of Yahweh's land, whither the sword will be summoned against him.

23. Yahweh is revealed in destruction, as in blessing (xxxvii. 28). Winckler regards this chapter, like the following, as referring to Alexander the Great, and as composed between the battles of the Granicus and Issus (between 334-333 B. C.), as an up-to-date application of the Babylonian Tiamat-myth (cf. note on

And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, **39**
Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against thee, O
Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal: and I will 2
turn thee about, and will lead thee on, and will cause
thee to come up from the uttermost parts of the north;
and I will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: and 3
I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause
thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall 4
upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy hordes,
and the peoples that are with thee: I will give thee
unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts
of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the 5
open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.
And I will send a fire on Magog, and on them that dwell 6
securely in the isles: and they shall know that I am the
LORD. And my holy name will I make known in the 7
midst of my people Israel; neither will I suffer my holy

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xxix. 3). How a Jewish writer of the fourth century should so have misunderstood Alexander's purpose, and why (and when) the passage, once written, was inserted here, are far from intelligible.

xxxix. 1–10. *The Destruction of the Invaders.* Ezekiel here starts from the same point as in chap. xxxviii, but now dwells upon the disaster that is to befall the host.

1. Cf. xxxviii. 2, 3; the mention of Magog is here omitted.

2. lead: the verb does not occur elsewhere; but its meaning is plain.

the mountains of Israel: cf. xxxviii. 21. Most invaders would be content with ravaging the plains; this horde leaves no hilly spot untouched.

3. Herodotus's word for the Scythians is 'mounted archers.'

4. As before Jericho, Israel itself does not need to fight.

6. Yahweh will show his might in Gog's own land, as well as in Israel. The 'isles,' if not purely a general term, were perhaps the islands in the Mediterranean.

7. suffer . . . to be profaned: *lit.* 'cause to be profaned,' a bold phrase, from which the LXX has shrunk, translating it 'shall be profaned.'

name to be profaned any more: and the nations shall
know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.
8 Behold, it cometh, and it shall be done, saith the Lord
9 GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken. And
they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and
shall make fires of the weapons and burn them, both the
shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the
handstaves, and the spears, and they shall make fires of
10 them seven years: so that they shall take no wood out
of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for
they shall make fires of the weapons: and they shall
spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed
them, saith the Lord GOD.
11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give
unto Gog a place for burial in Israel, the valley of them
that pass through on the east of the sea: and it shall

8. Cf. xxxviii. 17.

9. Canaan was poor in wood; as this invasion is to be followed by unbroken peace the weapons can be safely used as fuel. For the 'seven years,' cf. verse 12, 'seven months.' The number 'seven' is common in all apocalyptic writings; see especially Revelation, *passim*. Seven weapons are here catalogued (including the first and general term).

10. Cf. Isa. xxxiii. 1, and the moral of the story of Esther. In the national sufferings during and after the exile the principle of the *lex talionis* would naturally be found consolatory.

xxxix. 11–16. *The Burial of the Slain.*

11. a place for burial: to this the Hebrew adds 'there' (inserted in the A. V.), which the LXX pointed as 'renowned,' viz. for the burial of so mighty a host; cf. verse 13. This place is east of the Dead Sea, outside the proper—and holy—territory of Israel.

them that pass through: this appears to point forward,' somewhat clumsily, to the next clause and to verse 14; the consonants, however, can be read as 'the valley of the Abarim. Mount Abarim (Num. xxvii. 12, xxxiii. 47) is at the north-west of the plateau of Moab, east of the Dead Sea; a 'valley of Abarim' may have existed as well.

stop them that pass through: and there shall they bury
Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The
valley of Hamon-gog. And seven months shall the house 12
of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the
land. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; 13
and it shall be to them a renown, in the day that I shall
be glorified, saith the Lord GOD. And they shall sever 14
out men of continual employment, that shall pass through
the land to bury them that pass through, that remain
upon the face of the land, to cleanse it: after the end of
seven months shall they search. And they that pass 15
through the land shall pass through; and when any seeth
a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the
buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. And 16
Hamonah shall also be the name of a city. Thus shall
they cleanse the land.

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it shall stop: this is more natural than the A. V. ('it shall stop the noses of the passengers,' which Ewald also preferred) or the suggestion of the LXX ('Israel shall block up the mouth of the valley').

multitude: the Hebrew word is *Hamon*.

12. seven months: see verse 9. Corpses, especially of the heathen, are a defilement.

13. people of the land: a term increasingly frequent in later Hebrew for the 'laity,' or the unlearned, as opposed to priests and students of the law or 'scribes.'

14. continual, i. e. continuous or constant; verse 15 explains verse 14. After the seven months, in which the whole people is employed in the work of burial, certain individuals are selected to search the country for unburied corpses; where a bone is seen, a sign is set up for the 'buriers' to come and bury it, to guard against the least pollution. With LXX and R. V. marg., we must omit 'that pass through,' and since these men are distinct from the 'buriers,' 'to bury' should probably be changed to 'to search for.' This piece of detail is quite in the manner of the grave and practical Ezekiel.

16. Cf. verse 11. The words as they stand, however, can hardly be right; if they are not a gloss, the original text is beyond recovery.

17 And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD:
Speak unto the birds of every sort, and to every beast
of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather
yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice
for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of
18 Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood. Ye shall
eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the
princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of
19 bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall
eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken,
20 of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. And ye
shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with
mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.
21 And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the
nations shall see my judgement that I have executed,
22 and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house
of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from
23 that day and forward. And the nations shall know that

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xxxix. 17-24. *The Sacrificial Feast, and Yahweh's 'Theodicy.'*

17. Cf. xxxii. 4; Jer. xlvi. 10; Isa. xxxiv. 6; Zeph. iii. 8; Rev. xix. 17. In the more primitive Semitic religion, sacrifice was connected with feasting; cf. 1 Sam. ix. 13, &c. To an Israelite, the sacrifice here described is a grim parody of the true sacrifice, since the 'guests' drink the blood, a rite absolutely forbidden in Israel.

18. By a sudden change of figure the fallen captains are spoken of as sacrificial animals. Bashan was the great pasture-land of Palestine.

19. As in the days of the old sacrifices in Israel (cf. Amos ii. 8; Isa. xxviii. 8), the feast becomes an orgy.

20. Ezekiel does not shrink from reminding us that at this scene of repletion Yahweh is the host (cf. verse 17); it is *his* table.

22 ff. This 'crowning mercy' will not only establish the confidence of Israel in Yahweh; the nations, who can learn of Yahweh only through Israel, will recognize, after such a signal deliverance, that the reason of the calamities of Israel was not Yahweh's weakness but Israel's own sin—that is, Yahweh's righteous reaction against that sin.

the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they trespassed against me, and I hid my face from them: so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they fell all of them by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their 24
transgressions did I unto them; and I hid my face from them.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Now will I bring 25
again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. And they shall bear their shame, and all their 26
trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they shall dwell securely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; when I have brought them again from 27
the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, in 28
that I caused them to go into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land; and I will leave none of them any more there; neither will I hide 29
my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

xxxix. 25-29. *Final Description of the Future.* Like the 'coda' of a musical composition this passage contains all the chief 'motives' of the whole section (chaps. xxxiii–xxxix); the divine mercy shown in Israel's restoration; the holiness of Yahweh's own 'name'; the repentance and humiliation which follow the restoration; Yahweh's self-manifestation thereby both to Israel and to the world; and his abiding presence henceforth in the midst of his people. Thus Ezekiel reaches the 'C major of this life.'

26. they shall bear: the change of a single point would yield 'forget'; but this 'thorn in the promise' is characteristic of Ezekiel (cf. xxxvi. 31), and is not really a threat, but a preservative; see Introd., p. 39.

29. for I have poured out: the 'for' is important; since Israel has received Yahweh's spirit, it can sin no more. Cf. John

40 In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the

i. 13; 1 John iii. 9. 'God does not only work upon the Christian and leave him. The germ of the new life is that out of which the mature man will in due time be developed' (Westcott, *ad loc.*).

Like the later prophet of the exile, Ezekiel leaps forward in thought to a period in which the immediate deliverance from exile and invasion is identified with the consummation of all things,—future alike to Paul and to us. After the Jews had dwelt quietly in Palestine for three hundred years, a period of Hellenizing began, urged on by the Seleucids, till it was broken by the revolt of the Maccabeans against Antiochus Epiphanes. Later on the Maccabeans themselves provoked a reaction, and their party, as 'Sadducees,' found themselves in sympathy with the Gentiles, and ranged against the Pharisees, the people, and the law. Only twice were the two parties united—once against Jesus, and once, when all party distinctions were obliterated, in the final struggle with Rome. For the prophets it was enough to be convinced that out of the present distresses a deliverance would be vouchsafed, and that God's mercy and power would be revealed beyond the possibility of mistake; and such has been the faith, after the coming of the Messiah, of the Christian Church.

Division III. The Ordering of the Nation (xl–xlviii).

Eleven years elapse between chaps. xxxix and xl. No other date is given after that in xl. 1; the nine chapters evidently form one vision, and they will therefore, neglecting the fragment in xxix. 17–20, give us Ezekiel's latest discourse. We need not suppose that he had been silent throughout the interval; but chap. xxxix, whether later than xxxiii. 21 ff. or not, contains the last prophetic word to the exiles, and, with rare exceptions (xliii. 9 ff. and xliv. 6), what follows is not a prophetic address, but a detailed 'constitution.' Ezekiel did not indeed cease, with the utterance of chap. xxxix, to be the pastor and the statesman; he had pondered long over the established order of things which was to follow the final deliverance from Gog, and now at last he is ready to show how the new Israel is to live a life in which the old profanations of Yahweh's holiness will be impossible. Ezekiel's scheme (see Introd., p. 26 ff.) is of the greatest importance for the history of the Jewish law; he makes no actual reference to any existing law, or to any previous temple; but, on the other hand, he implies the existence of both, and, while building upon the past, he silently introduces many innovations (see notes on xliii. 7, xliv. 10, 24, xlv. 18, xlvi. 2, &c.). How far did he hope that his scheme would be carried out? Clearly, he looked forward to a restoration of the kind which actually came about, wherein the

beginning of the year, in the tenth *day* of the month, in

nation, robbed of its political independence, would be able to devote itself with new zeal to the duties of religion. At the same time, as a priest, he could speak with a tone of authority ; it had been, as he expected it would still be, the duty of the priests to instruct the mass of the people on the actual subjects with which these chapters deal (xliv. 23) ; while the similarity of these chapters to the latter half of Leviticus suggests (see Introd., p. 31) that Ezekiel was working with other priests, whose numbers, and possibly whose eagerness, would be increased after the destruction of the temple in 586 B. C.

The whole section is described as a vision ; there are no traces of the abnormal ecstatic condition such as occur in the earlier half of the book ; and, indeed, the precise descriptions, which imply that a diagram was, or had been, before his eyes, show that this vision, like that of Dante, had been prepared for by long and patient thought and elaboration. Yet there is nothing psychologically impossible in conceiving that after this preparation the vision rose before Ezekiel's mind as a completed whole, and that he felt himself conducted through the building, which he had come to know so well, by a heavenly guide. Some such experience is implied by the form of the narrative, and will perhaps account for the brevity and obscurity of certain parts.[1] This final vision will then be similar to the opening vision of the Divine Throne-car (see note *ad loc.*). Nor is it inconsistent with a vision or trance-experience that the scope should be enlarged until, passing far beyond the limits of human eyesight, it includes the whole land in its sweep. The vision divides itself into three parts—the temple, the temple ritual, and the people and the land. Throughout, nothing but purely religious subjects are discussed ; the secular, so prominent in the Book of the Covenant, is left entirely on one side, save for the statement that the priests are to act as judges. Civil and criminal laws are untouched ; the civil functions of the prince are left unregulated ; and the

[1] Gerrard Winstanley, the 'Digger' or 'Leveller' (*floruit* c. 1648–51), thus describes his state of mind when his convictions were 'revealed' (as he considered) to him : 'As I was in a trance, not long since, divers matters were present to my sight, which here must not be related—likewise I heard these words. [Here follow certain injunctions.] After I was raised up I was made to remember very fresh what I had seen or heard, and did declare all things to them that were with me, and I was filled with abundance of quiet peace and secret joy.' The ideas received contain principles of social and theological reform at once sane and astonishingly in advance of his own time. See L. H. Behrens, *The Digger Movement* (London, 1906).

the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the

domains of clergy and laity alike are strictly subordinated to their religious position in the nation. The reason is clear. Ezekiel emphasizes, as it had never been emphasized before, the distinction between priests and people; but only that the priestly character of the nation may be preserved. The spectacle of a whole nation, clear from all taint of profaneness, given up to the service of Yahweh, would indeed enable the Gentiles to understand the meaning of the words 'I am Yahweh'; and for Israel, freedom from ritual uncleanness was absolutely necessary if Yahweh was to dwell in their midst. To us the scheme here outlined may appear antiquated or unreal; to Ezekiel it was one long protest against the licentiousness and greed, the tyranny, and the laxness, which had debased the old popular religion; and the truest religion of the spirit (cf. John iv. 24) will need the preservative of some method and established order and practice, whether for communities or individuals.

Section I. The Temple (xl–xlii).

The prophet finds himself confronted by an angel on the outside of the rebuilt temple, and is led through the gateway of the outer court into the court itself (xl. 1–27); he then passes to a gateway opposite him, and is led into the inner court (xl. 28–47); the structure of the temple itself is then revealed to him, as well as the buildings connected with it (xl. 48—xli. 26); and lastly he is shown the other buildings in the inner court, and learns the dimensions of the whole (chap. xlii). While special attention is given to the entrance-gates, the dimensions of the courts, and the shrine, we are left entirely in the dark as to the height and shape of the structure; and the purpose and construction of several of the buildings within the enclosing walls is quite obscure. With a directness and concentration of purpose as impressive as it is tantalizing, Ezekiel passes by what does not assist his direct object, or he merely notices a structure which he assumes to be as familiar to us as it was to him. The temple proper would appear to be exactly similar to that of Solomon; the arrangement of the courts is entirely different; hence the care with which Ezekiel describes the latter. In the eyes of Ezekiel, the great requisite is symmetry, the symbol of complete holiness. Whether this feature was preserved in Zerubbabel's temple we cannot tell; it was not seriously aimed at by Herod. It must in any case have made the whole mass distinctly impressive (see the attempted restoration in Perrot and Chipiez' *Histoire de l'Art*, iv); crowning the summit of the hill on which Jerusalem was built, it rose, court above court, on well-marked terraces; the massive gate-houses would affect the

selfsame day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he

visitor much as do the portals of our cathedrals; within, the eye would be rested by the broad open spaces of the courts as by the spaces inside an Italian church; and then it would be attracted inevitably to what held the whole system of squares together, the majestic temple-house.

There can be no doubt that Ezekiel expected such a temple to be built, nor, after the consummation of chaps. xxxii-xxxix, would he fear that the resources of the restored nation would be insufficient for such a work. When, more than a hundred years later, the returned exiles took the work of rebuilding seriously in hand, they were glad enough to do the best they could under their dispiriting circumstances, and were quite content to leave Ezekiel's plans in neglect.[1] But for the modern student this temple has a far greater interest than that of Zerubbabel; its details shed a light nowhere else vouchsafed to us upon the ideals of Hebrew art, influenced, perhaps, by Babylonian masterpieces, yet entirely national and puritan; and they embody in material form Ezekiel's sober but intense conception of religion, as completely as the Gothic cathedrals translate into concrete and abiding stone and marble the soaring visions of mediaeval Christianity.

The above considerations will suffice to show how uncalled-for is the view of Volz that these chapters are the work of a pupil. They do not form an appendix; the ideas of the preceding chapters would be left in the air without this completion and coping-stone. Nor would a pupil have ventured on so bold a reconstruction. The text is unfortunately in a very unsatisfactory state. Sometimes we can follow the LXX, which is, on the whole, much clearer than the Hebrew; sometimes we must resort to conjecture. The rule that of two alternative readings we must follow the more difficult sometimes leaves us with expressions which, in the absence of an original diagram, are unintelligible. The badness of the text, if not owing to the carelessness of scribes, may result, as Cornill holds, from attempts to revise it into harmony with the actual dimensions of Zerubbabel's temple.

xl. 1-4. *Introduction to the Account of the New Temple.*

1. The five and twentieth year: 572 B. C. The city was 'smitten' in 586 B. C. The 'beginning of the year' is, in later Hebrew, a technical term for New Year's Day; it does not occur elsewhere in the O. T. The old Israelite year began in autumn;

[1] The remains of the temple of the Jewish settlers in Egypt recently discovered at Tel-el Yehudiyeh, thirty miles north of Cairo, are thought by Flinders Petrie to be an exact copy of Zerubbabel's temple. They exhibit no likeness to Ezekiel's design.

2 brought me thither. In the visions of God brought he
me into the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very
high mountain, whereon was as it were the frame of a city
3 on the south. And he brought me thither, and behold,
there was a man, whose appearance was like the appear-
ance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a
4 measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. And the
man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes,
and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all
that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew
them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that
thou seest to the house of Israel.
5 And behold, a wall on the outside of the house round

---

in the exile it commenced to be reckoned in spring; in Lev. xxiii. 24 the new year begins on the first day of the seventh month: cf. Lev. xxv. 9; probably, therefore, the month here not mentioned is the seventh, i. e. September.

the hand of the LORD: see note on iii. 22; 'thither,' i. e. to the city.

2. visions of God: cf. i. 1, viii. 3; vision may well include the prophet's reflections on what he saw: cf. Isa. i. 1, where the word, though different from that used here, is also derived from a root meaning 'to see.'

a very high mountain: as is plain from chap. xlvi, the idealized hill on which Jerusalem stood: cf. xvii. 22; Isa. ii. 2; Ps. xlviii. 2.

the frame of a city: the temple structure, which, as here described, would look like a city. It is 'on the south,' since Ezekiel would regard himself as coming from the north.

3. a man: cf. the six men in ix. 2. 'Brass' (see note on xxxvii. 13), i. e. shining and radiant. The 'line' is for larger dimensions (xlvii. 3; a different word), the 'reed' for smaller.

the gate: from verse 2, this would be the north gate; the actual work of measurement is begun at the east (verse 6).

4. Cf. Exod. xxv. 40; in the same manner, the Babylonian monarch Gudea (see p. 75) claimed to see in a vision a figure, with sacred animals round him, bidding the king build a temple, whose plan was revealed to him by other heavenly figures.

xl. 4–15. *The Outer Gate on the East.*

5. the house is the whole building; elsewhere it is used of the

about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long, of a cubit and an handbreadth each: so he measured the thickness of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed. Then came he unto the gate 6
which looketh toward the east, and went up the steps thereof; and he measured the threshold of the gate, one reed broad: and the other threshold, one reed broad. And every lodge was one reed long, and one reed broad; 7

---

temple proper, which, as worship grew more elaborate, was naturally marked off from the whole sacred place. Cf. Gen. xxviii. 22. Owing to the steep slope of the sides of the temple hill, this wide square would have necessitated an enormous substructure to secure a sufficiently large level space.

a cubit: i. e. each of the six cubits in the measuring rod was of the larger kind, equal to a cubit and a hand-breadth in the smaller measure; from 2 Chron. iii. 3 and 1 Kings vi. 2 it follows that Ezekiel's longer cubit was also the measure used for Solomon's temple, the common cubit of Ezekiel's time having shrunk by $\frac{1}{7}$. In Egypt, two cubits were in use, related to one another as 6 : 7; and also in Babylon, where the 'royal cubit' was $21\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, and the ordinary cubit $19\frac{5}{6}$, as can be seen from the rule of Gudea and the Senkereh tablet (cf. Haupt's discussion in Toy's *Ezekiel*, p. 179). There is no evidence for the exact length of the Hebrew cubit at this time; probably it would be influenced by Babylonian usage, and we may therefore roughly regard Ezekiel's (long) cubit as 21 inches, or rather more than half a yard; hence the 'reed' will be equal to $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

the building: i. e. the enclosing wall; its thickness is noteworthy.

6. the gate is really a large gate-house (see Plan B.) The eastern is the main entrance: cf. xliii. 1. The 'steps' were seven in number (cf. verse 22; LXX inserts that number here); the height of the entrance (i. e. the first terrace) above the surrounding level would be about seven feet (cf. xl. 49, xli. 8). The breadth of the threshold of the gate-house is of course the thickness of the wall (one reed).

and the other threshold: the literal translation is given in R. V. marg., 'even one threshold'; almost certainly a gloss.

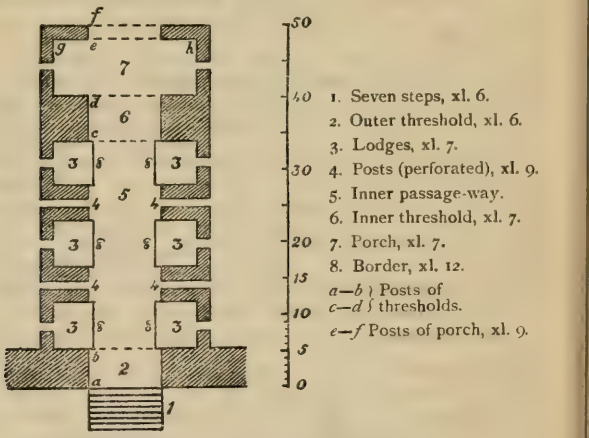
7. every lodge: these square cells, whose existence Ezekiel takes for granted, were three on each side of the main passage through the gate-house, built into the wall; between each 'lodge' or 'cell' are five cubits of wall space.

and *the space* between the lodges was five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate toward the
8 house was one reed. He measured also the porch of the
9 gate toward the house, one reed. Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two

---

the porch, or large open space or vestibule, within the gate-house, is an essential feature in Ezekiel's architecture; it reappears in the inner gates and in the temple proper. This vestibule is at the end of the gate-house, 'towards the house,' and the threshold by which it is reached is symmetrical with the outer threshold.

8. This verse, as R. V. marg. suggests, should be omitted as a copyist's repetition.



PLAN B. AN OUTER GATE-HOUSE.

9. The vestibule is eight cubits across (from threshold to opening).

the posts, or 'jambs' (R. V. marg.), are the faces of a wall where it is pierced for a gate-opening. As one passes into the court from the vestibule, the wall at either side is thus two cubits thick.

cubits; and the porch of the gate was toward the house.
And the lodges of the gate eastward were three on this side, 10
and three on that side; they three were of one measure:
and the posts had one measure on this side and on that
side. And he measured the breadth of the opening 11
of the gate, ten cubits; and the length of the gate, thirteen
cubits; and a border before the lodges, one cubit *on this* 12
side, and a border, one cubit on that side; and the lodges,
six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side. And 13
he measured the gate from the roof of the one lodge
to the roof of the other, a breadth of five and twenty
cubits; door against door. He made also posts, three- 14
score cubits; and the court *reached* unto the post, the

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10. See on verse 7; the 'posts' here will be the 'spaces' between each cell.

11. the gate is that by which one left the vestibule for the inner court; this was ten cubits across.

thirteen cubits: nothing can be made of this figure. Perhaps a copyist saw that the breadth of the whole gate-house is twenty-five cubits; hence, to subtract from this the breadth of a pair of cells would leave thirteen cubits; but the result cannot be called either the length or (LXX) breadth of the gate.

12. a border: the word properly denotes a boundary or a space bounded off (xxvii. 4), and is generally understood here as a barrier in front of the cells (see Plan B, 8) and encroaching on the central passage-way, to enable sentries standing in the cells to see the whole length of the passage without being jostled. The 'cubit,' like the 'six cubits,' is a measure of width, not height. The arrangement of the similar inner gates would seem to necessitate drains; and analogy would suggest that here also the 'borders' may be open spaces or drains. The word is also used in connexion with the altar in xliii. 13, &c.; the Oxford Lexicon translates 'barrier' in this passage, and 'border' in chap. xliii.

13. Twenty-five cubits is the total breadth of the gate-house; 'from roof to roof' must mean 'including the outer wall.' The cells would seem to be roofed over, the passage being perhaps open.

door against door, i.e. from the cells were exits (opposite to one another) through the back wall.

14. A very difficult verse. The dimension 'sixty cubits' is impossible; 'he made' is a strange variant on the usual words 'he

15 gate *being* round about. And *from* the forefront of the
gate at the entrance unto the forefront of the inner porch
16 of the gate were fifty cubits. And there were closed
windows to the lodges, and to their posts within the gate
round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows
were round about inward: and upon *each* post were palm
trees.

17 Then brought he me into the outer court, and, lo,
there were chambers and a pavement, made for the court
round about: thirty chambers were upon the pavement.

---

measured'; altered most easily (with the help of LXX) to 'and he measured the porch, twenty cubits, and round the porch of the gate was the outer court.' See Plan B; the twenty cubits are measured from *g* to *h*. Perrot and Chipiez, keeping to 'posts,' imagine these to have been like high *campanili*; but Ezekiel always neglects height in his measurements.

15. The entire length of the gate-house.

16. closed windows, i. e. with lattice-work fitted into the walls; otherwise the entrance would have been quite dark. Windows were also let into the wall-fronts ('posts' or jambs) between the cells, in spite of the thickness of the walls.

arches: the word occurs only in this chapter, and it is doubtful whether it should not in each case be read 'porch' (the consonants of the two words are identical, and the LXX does not distinguish between them). In the apparently different words we may simply have two pronunciations of the same word; with *êlam* ('arch') Delitzsch compares the Assyrian *êlamu*, used for anything ancient. The palm is a common element in Assyrian ornament. The palms are also found on the inner gates, and are the only ornaments contemplated.

xl. 17–27. *The Outer Court.* After passing through the gate-house the visitor finds himself in a wide court, flanked by buildings and faced by another and similar gate-house (100 cubits, or about sixty yards distant), through which another court, on a higher level than the outer one, is reached. Beyond this gate he will see the lofty structure of the temple proper.

17. chambers: probably ten on each of the three walls (north, east, and south). These chambers are for the use of the people, for festal meals, &c.; they existed in the old temple, and were sometimes private (cf. viii. 8; also 2 Kings xxiii. 11; Jer. xxxv. 2, 4). In connexion with them were galleries and colonnades.

And the pavement was by the side of the gates, answerable 18
unto the length of the gates, even the lower pavement.
Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the 19
lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without,
an hundred cubits, *both* on the east and on the north.
And the gate of the outer court whose prospect is toward 20
the north, he measured the length thereof and the breadth
thereof. And the lodges thereof were three on this side 21
and three on that side; and the posts thereof and the
arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate:
the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth five
and twenty cubits. And the windows thereof, and the 22
arches thereof, and the palm trees thereof, were after the
measure of the gate whose prospect is toward the east;
and they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches
thereof were before them. And there was a gate to the 23
inner court over against the *other* gate, *both* on the north
and on the east; and he measured from gate to gate an
hundred cubits. And he led me toward the south, and 24
behold a gate toward the south: and he measured the
posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these
measures. And there were windows in it and in the arches 25

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18. For the pavement running round the outer wall of the court, see Plan A, 3. It extended into the court as far as did the gate-house. 'Lower,' in opposition to the inner or higher court (verse 31).

19. For the last clause, which is perhaps a gloss, the LXX has 'facing eastwards, and he led me to the north.' The breadth of the court is measured opposite both the east and the north gates; it is repeated in verse 23.

20. The prophet crosses the outer court from the east gate to the north gate. The dimensions of the three outer gates are identical.

21. arches: probably, 'porch'; so in verses 22, 24, 25, 26. See note on verse 16.

22. seven steps: cf. verse 26, and see note on verse 6.

thereof round about, like those windows: the length was
26 fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. And
there were seven steps to go up to it, and the arches
thereof were before them: and it had palm trees, one
on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts
27 thereof. And there was a gate to the inner court toward
the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the
south an hundred cubits.
28 Then he brought me to the inner court by the south
gate: and he measured the south gate according to these
29 measures; and the lodges thereof, and the posts thereof,
and the arches thereof, according to these measures: and
there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round
about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits
30 broad. And there were arches round about, five and
31 twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad. And the
arches thereof were toward the outer court; and palm
trees were upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it
32 had eight steps. And he brought me into the inner
court toward the east: and he measured the gate ac-
33 cording to these measures; and the lodges thereof, and
the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to

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xl. 28–37. *The Inner Court.* Mounting the eight steps (verse 34) and passing through the inner gate-house, the visitor finds himself in a smaller but equally symmetrical court, exactly 100 cubits square, in the centre of which is the great altar, eighteen cubits square and twelve high (cf. xliii. 13–17). On the west side is the higher terrace on which is built the temple proper.

28. Ezekiel enters through the south gate, as he has been at the south side of the outer court (verse 24). These gates are precisely like those of the outer court, save that the visitor reaches the vestibule first instead of last (verses 31, 34, reading 'porch' for 'arches,' and see note on verse 16).

30. This verse is omitted by the LXX and most editors; nor is there any room for these dimensions of the 'arches' or 'porch.'

31. For 'arches' read 'porch'; so in verses 34, 36.

these measures: and there were windows therein and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad. And the arches 34
thereof were toward the outer court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps. And he brought me to 35
the north gate: and he measured *it* according to these measures; the lodges thereof, the posts thereof, and the 36
arches thereof; and there were windows therein round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. And the posts thereof were toward 37
the outer court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.

And a chamber with the door thereof was by the posts 38
at the gates; there they washed the burnt offering. And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, 39
and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt

---

34. The outer gates had seven steps. The rise in Solomon's temple is not mentioned. From xli. 8, each step was $\frac{3}{6}$ c.; hence the height of the inner above the outer court is about eight and a half feet.

xl. 38-47. *The Sacrificial Tables and the Chambers of the Inner Court.*

38. The verse is too brief to be clear; does this arrangement apply to each of the gates? Is the chamber outside the gate-house (thus breaking the symmetry), or, as Kraetzschmar prefers, hollowed out of the wall between porch and cell?

39. the gate: Smend holds that this is the principal, or east gate, which was to be kept closed, and on whose south side flowed the temple-stream. But Davidson points out that the prophet is at the north side (verse 35), and that in Lev. i. 11, iv. 24, &c., the slaughter of animals for burnt-offering, sin-offering, and thank-offering takes place at the north side of the altar; Ezekiel (viii. 5) calls the north gate 'the gate of the altar.' It seems more probable, however, that as the chambers for the priests (verse 44) were on the south and north, so these tables were at the east, thus preserving the symmetry. See Plan A, 14.

40 offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering. And on the *one* side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the gate toward the north, were two tables; and on the other side, which belonged to the porch of the gate, were
41 two tables. Four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables,
42 whereupon they slew *the sacrifices*. And there were four tables for the burnt offering, of hewn stone, a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon they laid the instruments where-
43 with they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice. And the hooks, an handbreadth long, were fastened within round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the
44 oblation. And without the inner gate were chambers for the singers in the inner court, which was at the side of the

---

Sin-offerings and guilt-offerings are here mentioned for the first time in the O. T. These offerings are prepared under cover.

40. toward the north: if the text is right (the LXX differs considerably), these words imply that the reference is to the east gate; 'on the other side' will refer to the south side of the gate; the clause 'which belonged to the porch of the gate' is not necessarily confined, as the comma seems to imply, to 'the other side.'

41, 42. The references to the tables are obscure; but it would seem that there were altogether eight tables for killing the sacrificial animals, two on either hand inside the porch, and two more on either hand outside. To each pair of tables went another and smaller table, of hewn stone, on which the instruments were laid. These tables are described with special care, though their peculiar importance is not clear.

43. hooks should probably be read (as R.V. marg.) 'ledges,' to prevent the holy altar flesh from falling to the ground. The last clause perhaps implies that hitherto the 'oblation' (a rare word in Ezekiel in this sense) had been killed on the ground.

44. chambers for the singers should be read as 'two chambers' (cf. verse 45); so LXX. 'Without the inner gate,' i. e. in the inner court outside the gate-house (cf. Plan A, 11). The 'east gate' should almost certainly be the 'south,' opposite to the northern chamber just mentioned.

north gate; and their prospect was toward the south: one at the side of the east gate having the prospect toward the north. And he said unto me, This chamber, whose 45 prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house. And the chamber whose 46 prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok, which from among the sons of Levi come near to the LORD to minister unto him. And he measured the court, 47 an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar was before the house.

Then he brought me to the porch of the house, and 48 measured each post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate was three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that

---

45. This chamber: the first of the two mentioned in verse 44; cf. xliv. 14; by the priests, as distinct from the 'sons of Zadok,' (cf. xliv. 15), are probably meant the Levites of xliv. 10.

46. the altar: not hitherto mentioned (cf. verse 47), but described at length in xliii. 13-17; it stood in the middle of the inner court. Cf. viii. 12.

the sons of Zadok: see xliv. 10. 11. Ezekiel is the first to emphasize the distinction between priests and Levites.

xl. 48, 49. *The Temple Vestibule.* From the chambers by the north and south gates Ezekiel passes across the court to the terrace on which stands the temple proper; it is like the gate-houses, but on a scale twice as large. The temple has a spacious vestibule, and two rows of cells; but the cells are separated from the central passage-way, which is enlarged into a nave and an interior shrine.

48. The thickness of each 'post' (Plan C, *h-l*, *i-m*) is that of the walls, five cubits, or over 8 feet. As the text stands, the 'breadth of the gate' must refer to the main entrance. Perhaps it might be explained as having two doors of three cubits each: but such an arrangement is unlikely (cf. verse 49); and the LXX reads 'the width of the entrance (Plan C, *h-i*) was fourteen cubits, and the side-pieces of the entrance of the vestibule were three cubits on either side' (*g-h* and *i-j*; and this agrees with

49 side. The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; even by the steps whereby they went up to it: and there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

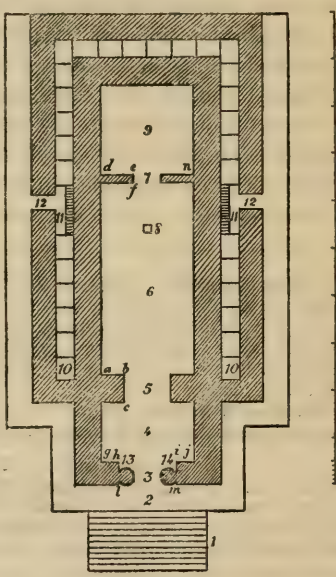
---

verse 49, according to which the whole breadth of the vestibule is twenty cubits (*g–j*; verse 49).

49. The breadth should be twelve cubits (so LXX), or the

1. Ten steps.
2. Surrounding pavement, xli. 8.
3. Outer entrance.
4. Porch, xl. 49.
5. Inner entrance, xli. 2.
6. Holy place, xli. 2.
7. Entrance to most holy place, xli. 3.
8. Altar, xli. 22.
9. Most holy place, xli. 4.
10. Priests' cells (in three stories), xli. 5.
11. Stairway to upper stories, xli. 7.
12. Exit to separate place, xli. 11.
13, 14. Pillars, xl. 49.

e–f, *b–c*, *h–l* } Posts, xl. 48, xli. 1, xli. 3.



PLAN C. THE TEMPLE-HOUSE.

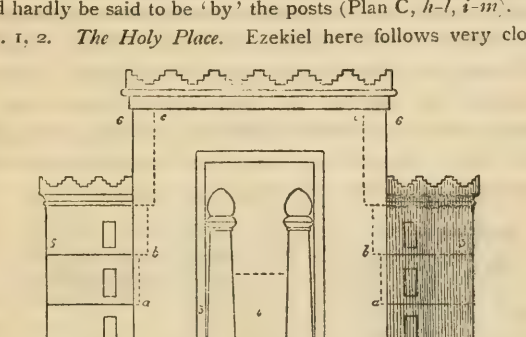
total length, 100 cubits (xli. 13), cannot be made up. The LXX also gives the number of steps as ten, the temple terraces increasing in height as one proceeds inwards. The two pillars correspond to 'Jachin and Boaz' in Solomon's temple (1 Kings vii. 21, 45). Associated as were the pillars with heathen worship, these two are allowed by Ezekiel, being probably too familiar to

And he brought me to the temple, and measured the **41**
posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits
broad on the other side, which was the breadth of the

---

be easily omitted from the new building. The diameter of each pillar in Solomon's temple was about four cubits: if this dimension is preserved, the actual opening between them would only be six cubits. T. W. Davies supposes the pillars to have stood in front of the porch (*Dict. Bib.*, art. TEMPLE); but in that case they could hardly be said to be 'by' the posts (Plan C, *h-l*, *i-m*).

xli. 1, 2. *The Holy Place.* Ezekiel here follows very closely



PLAN D. THE TEMPLE-HOUSE.

Front Elevation.

1. Ten steps, xl. 49. 2. Pavement, xli. 8. 3. Pillars (the 'posts' are at the side of them), xl. 49. 4. Entrance (the dotted lines represent the entrance to the most holy place), xli. 3. 5. Walls of the three-storied side-chambers (the dotted lines *a-b-c* represent the rebatements in the walls), xli. 6. 6. Level of window along side of temple, xli. 16.

the dimensions of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vi, vii). The height of Solomon's temple was thirty cubits, or about fifty feet (see Plan D).

1. the posts: i. e. the thickness of the wall as one passes from vestibule to holy place (see Plan C. *b-c*), the wall being thicker here than in the entrance to the vestibule (xl. 48).

2 tabernacle. And the breadth of the entrance was ten
cubits; and the sides of the entrance were five cubits on
the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he
measured the length thereof, forty cubits, and the breadth,
3 twenty cubits. Then went he inward, and measured
each post of the entrance, two cubits: and the entrance,
six cubits; and the breadth of the entrance, seven cubits.
4 And he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits, and
the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he
5 said unto me, This is the most holy place. Then he
measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the
breadth of every side-chamber, four cubits, round about
6 the house on every side. And the side-chambers were in
three stories, one over another, and thirty in order; and

tabernacle: *lit.* 'tent'; but Ezekiel never uses this term; the last clause is probably a gloss, and is wanting in LXX.

2. sides: *lit.* 'shoulders'; the spaces from the openings to the side-walls of the building; entrance and 'sides' together make twenty cubits; see note on xl. 48.

xli. 3, 4. *The Most Holy Place*—a square chamber, which is empty.

3. Here Ezekiel himself is not allowed to enter. The dividing-wall between the two chambers is only two cubits thick; the 'breadth of the entrance' means the two halves of this wall, which, with the opening (six cubits), amount to twenty cubits. Cf. 1 Kings vi. 16, 20, 31.

4. the most holy place: *lit.* 'holy of holy places'; the first instance of the expression in the O. T., and therefore hardly yet, as in the Levitical legislation, a technical term.

before the temple: i. e. along the front of the inner shrine (Plan C, *d–n*).

xli. 5–11. *The Side-Buildings.* It is unnecessary to discuss at length the almost hopeless difficulties of the text of this passage. There were side-buildings also in Solomon's temple; and doubtless to the priestly Ezekiel their construction would be of great interest; but the details, whatever they actually were, do not effect our general conception of the structure.

5. six cubits: cf. verse 1.

6. The text means that there were three stories, and either thirty or thirty-three cells in each, presumably for temple furniture

they entered into the wall which belonged to the house for the side-chambers round about, that they might have hold *therein*, and not have hold in the wall of the house. And the side-chambers were broader as they 7 encompassed *the house* higher and higher; for the encompassing of the house went higher and higher round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house *continued* upward; and so one went up *from* the lowest *chamber* to the highest by the middle *chamber*. I saw 8 also that the house had a raised basement round about: the foundations of the side-chambers were a full reed of six great cubits. The thickness of the wall, which was 9 for the side-chambers, on the outside, was five cubits: and that which was left was the place of the side chambers

(cf. 1 Kings vi. 6). Josephus speaks of only thirty cells in each story of Solomon's building. The second half of the verse refers to the arrangement described in 1 Kings vi. 6, 'on the outside he made rebatements in the wall of the house'; thus the temple-walls would grow thinner towards the roof; the walls themselves were too sacred to be pierced by the beams of the stories. See Plan D, 5.

7. Proportionate to the rebatements the width of the chambers increased in each story right round the temple. According to 1 Kings vi the storys increased in width by a cubit each. 'One went up' (1 Kings vi. 8), by a ladder and trap-door (spiral staircases were unknown in the East), from the ground-floor to first and second floors.

8. I saw should be, as suggested by the LXX, 'and there appeared.' The raised basement, or, as we should probably read, pavement, makes a walk round all three sides of the temple, and acts as a further protection for its 'holiness' (Plan C, 2). The word translated 'great' cannot signify a species of cubit (xl. 5 is not here referred to), and should probably be read 'at its side.' The six cubits correspond to the ten steps (xl. 49), marking the height of the terrace.

9–11. The wall was thicker than the side-chambers, as sometimes happened in Assyrian buildings. 'That which was left' appears to be twenty cubits broad in verse 10, and five cubits broad in verse 11. What was its relation to the 'pavement' of verse 8, and the 'separate place' of verse 12? Probably the five

10 that belonged to the house. And between the chambers
was a breadth of twenty cubits round about the house on
11 every side. And the doors of the side-chambers were
toward *the place* that was left, one door toward the north,
and another door toward the south: and the breadth of
12 the place that was left was five cubits round about. And
the building that was before the separate place at the
side toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the
wall of the building was five cubits thick round about,
13 and the length thereof ninety cubits. So he measured
the house, an hundred cubits long; and the separate place,
and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred
14 cubits long; also the breadth of the face of the house,

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cubits (verse 11) measure the breadth of the raised pavement and the space between the temple-wall and the edge of the terrace, while the twenty cubits (verse 10) denote the passage between the raised pavement and the priests' chambers (Plan A, 6).

10. 'Between' can hardly be right as it stands; see note on previous verse.

11. The side-chambers were thus entered from the outside, not the inside.

xli. 12-14. *The Hinder Building and Total Measurements.*

12. the building (see xl. 5): here used of a structure whose purpose is not mentioned, lying west of the temple, oblong in shape (Plan A, 10). To one looking westwards it lies 'before' or in front of a passage, or 'separate place,' twenty cubits broad, which ran round the temple-terrace on the three sides, north, west, and south. This 'building' may be identical with the place called 'Parbar' ('open summer-house') in 1 Chron. xxvi. 18: cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 11.

13. The totals are thus made up; the 'house,' from east to west:—wall of vestibule five, vestibule twelve, wall of entrance to nave six, nave forty, dividing-wall two, shrine twenty, temple-wall six, breadth of side chambers four, outer wall five; 100 cubits in all. From west temple-wall to west outside wall (100 cubits):—'separate place' twenty, depth of 'building' seventy, walls of 'building' 5+5.

14. The total breadth is thus made up:—'separate place' 20+20, pavement 5+5, outer wall 5+5, breadth of side buildings 4+4, temple wall 6+6, breadth of temple twenty; 100 cubits in all.

and of the separate place toward the east, an hundred cubits.

And he measured the length of the building before the 15
separate place which was at the back thereof, and the galleries thereof on the one side and on the other side, an hundred cubits; and the inner temple, and the porches of the court; the thresholds, and the closed windows, and 16
the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the threshold, cieled with wood round about, and *from* the ground up to the windows; now the windows were covered; to *the space* above the door, even unto the 17
inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure. And it was made with 18

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xli. 15-26. *Description of the Interior of the Temple.* As in Solomon's temple, no stone was to be seen; floors and walls would seem to have been wainscotted; as the windows could let in but little light, lamps would probably give a dim illumination, by which the continuous carvings of cherubs and palm-trees could be distinguished. The length of nave and shrine together (interior) was rather more than 100 ft., i.e. some 25 ft. shorter than the length of the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral. Neither gold nor cedar (1 Kings vi. 20) is mentioned.

15. The account of the interior is prefixed by a final measurement, which should really go with the preceding verse.

he measured: here, as in verse 13, the tense used implies a continued process, made up of the subordinate acts of measuring. From north to south the interior of the 'building' measures ninety cubits. The 'galleries' (a term only used here, verse 16, and xlii. 3, 5) are quite obscure; possibly 'balconies' are meant. Cornill reads 'walls,' which are here included in the measurement. The fresh paragraph thus properly begins at 'and the inner temple'; the LXX suggests the reading, 'the temple and the interior.'

16. For the nouns in verses 15, 16 some predicate is needed. LXX suggests 'were wainscotted' or 'veneered'; the second half of verse 16 probably contained the words 'up to the roof went wooden balconies all round.'

17. by measure: or, as R.V. marg., 'measures.' This verse would appear to mean that 'from the ground to the windows, from the side-walls by the entrance to the inner shrine, as also

cherubim and palm trees; and a palm tree was between
19 cherub and cherub, and every cherub had two faces; so
that there was the face of a man toward the palm tree on
the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the
palm tree on the other side: *thus was it* made through
20 all the house round about. From the ground unto above
the door were cherubim and palm trees made: thus was
21 the wall of the temple. As for the temple, the door posts
were squared; and as for the face of the sanctuary, the
appearance *thereof* was as the appearance *of the temple.*
22 The altar was of wood, three cubits high, and the length
thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the
length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and
he said unto me, This is the table that is before the LORD.
23, 24 And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors. And
the doors had two leaves *apiece*, two turning leaves; two

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outside, were, on the whole wall, measured spaces' in the wainscot, for the ornamentation.

18. The cherubs are kept for the interior of the temple (cf. verse 26); they differ from those of chap. i in having only two faces: cf. 1 Kings vi. 29; also Ezek. xxiii. 14.

20, 21. The reading of the R.V. marg. is to be preferred ('and as for the wall of the temple, the door-posts were squared'), the last word of verse 20 ('the temple') having been inserted in error.

21. In Solomon's temple, the doors of the shrine were pentagonal (so Benzinger &c. interpret 1 Kings vi. 31). In the uncertain text of this verse some reference to the doors of the shrine is to be expected. The last words of the verse should probably be omitted, and we should read 'in front of the shrine was the appearance (verse 22) as the appearance of an altar of wood.'

22. This altar or table is the only piece of furniture in the temple (the ark is never heard of after the destruction of Solomon's temple). It is probably to be identified with the table of shewbread (overlaid with gold in Solomon's temple), which is mentioned in connexion with the shrine at every stage of its history, while the altar of incense only appears in the latest legislation. 'Length,' as in R.V. marg., should be 'base.'

24. In Solomon's temple only the nave (not the shrine) has

leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other. And 25
there were made on them, on the doors of the temple,
cherubim and palm trees, like as were made upon the
walls; and there were thick beams of wood upon the face
of the porch without. And there were closed windows 26
and palm trees on the one side and on the other side,
on the sides of the porch: thus were the side-chambers
of the house, and the thick beams.

Then he brought me forth into the outer court, the way **42**
toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber
that was over against the separate place, and which was
over against the building toward the north. Before the 2
length of an hundred cubits was the north door, and the

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double doors, i. e. the outer half of each door turned on an axis, so that it was not necessary to open the whole door.

25. These 'beams' (1 Kings vii. 6) may denote a covering or roofing-over outside, as in the Phoenician temple at El-amrit; or possibly the 'landing' at the top of the steps is meant.

26. The last clause of this verse forms part of an incomplete sentence. The word rendered 'thick beams' is similar to that discussed in the last note, but is found nowhere else.

xlii. 1–12. *The Priests' Cells in the Inner Court.* Opposite the sides of the temple proper, on the north and south sides of the inner court, are two pairs of blocks of buildings used as refectories and dressing-rooms for priests (cf. xlvi. 19). The special purpose which they had to serve doubtless explains Ezekiel's care in describing them; unfortunately, the state of the text still renders the determination of several details very difficult.

1. he brought me forth. LXX adds 'from the inner court'; he faces and enters the 'chamber,' or cells, on the north side of the temple (Plan A, 8) across the passage-way called the 'separate place.' The 'building' is here the outer surrounding wall (xl. 5) and not the 'hinder building' of xli. 12. LXX mentions the number of cells, either five or, in other MSS., fifteen.

2. If the text is right, we must suppose with Davidson that he is at the door which entered the longer block of chambers from the passage between them (Plan A, 7). This block was one hundred cubits long, and the 'breadth' of the two blocks together, with the passage, was fifty cubits. The LXX, more simply, reads,

3 breadth was fifty cubits. Over against the twenty *cubits*
which belonged to the inner court, and over against the
pavement which belonged to the outer court, was gallery
4 against gallery in the third story. And before the
chambers was a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way
of one cubit; and their doors were toward the north.
5 Now the upper chambers were shorter: for the galleries
took away from these, more than from the lower and the
6 middlemost, in the building. For they were in three
stories, and they had not pillars as the pillars of the
courts: therefore *the uppermost* was straitened more than
7 the lowest and the middlemost from the ground. And
the wall that was without by the side of the chambers,

'the length on the north side was one hundred cubits,' which certainly suits the last words better.

3. the twenty cubits: what this number refers to is not specified; it has probably crept into the text in error, and is absent from LXX. Davidson suggests that the term refers to the 'separate place.' It would have been more natural that the inner and outer courts alone should have been mentioned; but since the 'pavement' of the latter is mentioned, some special part of the former may originally have stood in the text. Ezekiel assumes the reader to know that, as he says in verse 6, the blocks are of three stories, but he mentions the 'galleries' or 'balconies' facing one another across the passage between.

4. This passage was ten cubits broad and (so LXX) 100 cubits long (cf. verse 2). 'Their doors' means the doors of the southern block. The northern block would presumably be entered from its south side.

5. the upper chambers: the cells on the third story of the blocks; their outer wall stands back from the others, to allow of the 'gallery' which runs in front of them looking down on the passage. These chambers decrease in breadth, as the chambers in the temple-house increase, towards the top.

6. See verse 3. The obscure phrase 'pillars of the court' is explained by the reading of the LXX, 'pillars of the outer court'; i. e. the chambers on the outside wall were like these chambers in being arranged in three stories; but they, unlike these, had pillars or arcading instead of 'galleries.'

7, 8. By the chambers that were in the outer court must be

toward the outer court before the chambers, the length thereof was fifty cubits. For the length of the chambers 8
that were in the outer court was fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple were an hundred cubits. And from 9
under these chambers was the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the outer court. In the 10
thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, before the separate place, and before the building, there were chambers. And the way before them was like the 11
appearance of *the way of* the chambers which were toward the north; according to their length so was their breadth: and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors. And ac- 12
cording to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south was a door in the head of the way, even the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one

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meant the outer block; this was half the length of the inner block, hence a wall or (R. V. margin) 'fence' (the word is different from that previously used for 'wall') of fifty cubits is needed to run 'toward the outer court before the chambers,' separating the inner from the outer court. In the second half of verse 8 'lo' occurs strangely; LXX reads 'these (the shorter block) faced those (the longer)—in all, 100 cubits [in length].'

9. from under these chambers: i. e. from the lower level of the outer court. The outer court lies of course to the north of these blocks (cf. xlvi. 19), and if the entry was 'on the east side' we must imagine a flight of steps running parallel to the wall of the inner court (see Plan A, 13).

10. In the thickness of the wall should be 'at the beginning of the wall,' and the words should be joined to verse 9.

10-12. The text as it stands must be considerably amended, and approximated to what is found in the LXX. 'On the south side, in front of the separate place and the building, were chambers (verse 11) with a passage-way in front of them, like the chambers on the north, as long and as broad as they, with the same goings out and arrangements; and according to their doors (verse 12) were the doors of the chambers that were toward the south; there was a door at the beginning of the passage-way, before the wall on the east as one entereth into them [from the

13 entereth into them. Then said he unto me, The north
chambers and the south chambers, which are before the
separate place, they be the holy chambers, where the
priests that are near unto the LORD shall eat the most
holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things,
and the meal offering, and the sin offering, and the guilt
14 offering; for the place is holy. When the priests enter
in, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the
outer court, but there they shall lay their garments
wherein they minister; for they are holy: and they shall
put on other garments, and shall approach to that which
pertaineth to the people.

15 Now when he had made an end of measuring the
inner house, he brought me forth by the way of the gate

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outer court].' The comparison with the northern chambers in verse 11 makes it clear that 'east' (verse 10) must be altered to 'south.' By the 'building' (verse 10) will be meant the temple proper, beyond the 'separate place.' The word rendered 'directly' (verse 12) does not occur elsewhere. The entrance on the east (verse 12) corresponds to that mentioned in verse 9.

xlii. 13–14. *The uses to which the Priests' Cells are put.*

13. The 'chambers' are the longer blocks of cells, in which the priests are to eat the most holy things. These most holy things are only to be kept, and consumed, by holy persons in a holy place; the idea of the sacrifice as a festal meal to which the offerer invites the deity is now definitely set aside.

the meal offering, &c.: cf. xliv. 29; these three offerings explain the term 'most holy things.'

14. Smend suggests that the priests put off their ordinary clothes in the shorter blocks of cells: cf. xliv. 19. The LXX reads 'no one shall enter these except the priests.' The Hebrew text means that the priests are not to wear their sacred clothes outside the inner court, lest contact with the 'laity' should profane them. It is clear, therefore, that these blocks of cells are special safeguards for the distinction between the holy and the common.

xlii. 15–20. *The Final Measurements.*

15. The angel now brings Ezekiel to the spot where he had met him, outside the outer east gate.

whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about. He measured on the east side with the 16
measuring reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about. He measured on the north side, five 17
hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about. He measured on the south side, five hundred reeds, with 18
the measuring reed. He turned about to the west 19
side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed. He measured it on the four sides: it had 20
a wall round about, the length five hundred, and the breadth five hundred, to make a separation between that which was holy and that which was common.

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16. reeds must be read, here and in the following verses, as 'cubits' (so LXX; cf. xlv. 2); the open space round the temple structure is to be only fifty cubits broad.

The totals are thus made up:—*a*. on the east side, i. e. from north to south; 4×50 (gate-house lengths, xl. 21, 25, 29, 36) + 2×100 (space between outer and inner gate-houses, xl. 23, 27) + 100 (space between the two inner gates, xl. 47); *b*. on the north side, i. e. from east to west; 2×50 (length of gate-houses) + 100 (between outer and inner gate-houses) + 100 (breadth of inner forecourt, xl. 47) + 100 (temple proper, xli. 13) + 100 (building behind temple, xli. 13).

20. a wall: this is the 'building' of xl. 5.

a separation: such a separation between sacred and profane seems against xlviii. 12, where the whole precincts are holy; but it is only natural that there should be gradations in holiness; the main interest is obviously in the temple itself.

For Ezekiel, as for Solomon, the real place of worship would be the court; the temple proper would be dark and silent. In Solomon's arrangement there was only one temple-court; the 'outer' court contained also the royal palace. The distinction between outer and inner courts belongs to Ezekiel, who guards against any such profanation with the utmost care. He says nothing of the brazen sea or the 'lavers.' Zerubbabel's temple had two courts, but the laity had access to both (this is also contemplated in the Priests' code); the Holy of Holies was separated from the Holy Place by a curtain (the 'veil of the temple') instead of doors. In Herod's temple the outer or Gentiles' court was very large—widest on the south side—and the

43 Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate

inner court contained women's court, court of Israelites, Priests' court, and the temple proper. See its reconstruction in Sanday, *Sacred Sites of the Gospels.* Reconstructions and elevations of Solomon's temple are given in Stade's *History of Israel*, vol. i, and *Hastings's Dict. Bib.*, art. *Temple*, by T. Witton-Davies. Very elaborate reconstructions of Ezekiel's temple are given by Chipiez in Perrot and Chipiez's *Art in Sardinia, Syria, &c.*, vol. ii, the two most important of which are reproduced in Toy's *Ezekiel.* Chipiez conjectures the various details from surviving examples of Phoenician art. Many of these are uncertain, and the lofty pylons which he places at each gate-house and at the temple-house are unwarrantably borrowed from Egyptian architecture. See also Skinner's *Ezekiel* (*Expositor's Bible*), pp. 406 ff. Ezekiel's whole structure is (verse 20) about 300 yards square ; the length of the inner court, to the rear of the temple proper, is 150 yards ; the temple proper (exterior), 60 yards. The Parthenon measures nearly 70 yards, and St. Paul's just over 150 yards.

Nothing can be gathered from the text as to the style of the temple. The Jews had come in contact with three architectural styles—Egyptian, Phoenician, and Assyrian. The distinctive features of Egyptian architecture, and especially the conspicuous pylons and long colonnades of its temples, are nowhere suggested ; indeed, the whole of the O. T. is surprisingly free from the influence of Egyptian thought or art ; wide and open courts, however, are characteristic of Phoenician temples ; simplicity and massiveness combined with much ornament are observable in all typical Assyrian structures. If Ezekiel's thought ever passed beyond the ground-plan of his temple, he would probably imagine a building with an appearance as suggestive of durable strength as an Assyrian palace, but built of stone instead of brick, and with no ornament save in the interior.

Section II. The Temple Service (xliii–xlvi).

Now that the plan of the whole structure has been revealed, the prophet is ready to behold the entrance of Yahweh into the temple which he had left in chap. xi. Yahweh announces that the old impurities are now to be at an end, and that the prophet is to make known to the people the new plan (xliii. 1–12). Then follow the measurements of the great altar (xliii. 13–17) and the description of the sacrifices by which it is to be consecrated (xliii. 18–27). Next, as Ezekiel passes to the east and the north gates, he learns of the exclusion of foreigners and the degradation of the Levites (xliv. 1–14), and of the duties and restrictions of the priests (xliv. 15–31), and their revenues (xlv. 1–8), with the amounts of the various

that looketh toward the east: and behold, the glory of 2
the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his
voice was like the sound of many waters: and the earth
shined with his glory. And it was according to the 3
appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to

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temple offerings (xlv. 9–17). These are followed by the ritual of the two days of atonement (xlv. 18–25), and of the other Sabbaths and festivals, in which the offerings and functions of the prince are described with special care, as also the entailing of his estates (xlvi. 1–18); and the section closes with a notice, suggested by the previous directions as to the offerings, of the temple kitchens (xlvi. 19–24).

On this section, cf. Introd., pp. 27 ff. Except for the regulations as to the prince, Ezekiel here covers ground covered also by Deuteronomy and by the later or Priests' code. Detached contrasts are pointed out in the notes. In general, Ezekiel comes midway between the two, though at times he is more thoroughgoing than the latter. The Priests' code developed Ezekiel's ideas, but did not regard it as desirable or possible that they should all be carried out in practice. Both Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, under the influence of certain conceptions of holiness, give a revision of existing practice so developed that in some cases it amounts to an actual break with the past; yet the underlying ideas—sacrifice as the means of approach to God, the distinction between the holy and the common, and the importance of correct ritual—exist in all. It is true that Ezekiel seems to oppose Jeremiah and all the older prophets with regard to the worth of cultus. But for Ezekiel the law is the means of preserving religious freedom from contamination; without it, the prophetic ideas would hardly have survived. The real hope of the future for Ezekiel lies in perfect or willing obedience to the law; between the physical and moral aspects of holiness he refuses to distinguish.

xliii. 1–9. *The Entrance of Yahweh into the Temple.*

1. The prophet is now brought round again from the west to the east gate: cf. xl. 3.

2. The glory of Yahweh had left by the east gate (x. 19, xi. 22 f.). For the thunder and lightning which attend his appearance, cf. Rev. i. 15.

3. The expression is even more pleonastic in the present Hebrew text: 'And according to the appearance was the appearance which I saw according to the appearance which I saw.' At least one of the three occurrences of the word is wrong.

the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city;
and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the
4 river Chebar: and I fell upon my face. And the glory
of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate
5 whose prospect is toward the east. And the spirit took
me up, and brought me into the inner court; and
6 behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. And I
heard one speaking unto me out of the house; and
7 a man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man,
this is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles
of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children
of Israel for ever: and the house of Israel shall no more
defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by
their whoredom, and by the carcases of their kings *in*

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when I came should be 'when he came' (the change demanded being very slight). Ezekiel took no part in the destruction of the city described in chaps. viii, ix; nor is xxxii. 18 a real parallel.

visions should be in the singular.

by the river Chebar: cf. i. 4 ff., iii. 23, viii. 2, 22.

4. the glory corresponds to the Shekinah of the later Jewish literature.

5. the spirit: see on ii. 2. It is by the spirit that Ezekiel in his trance-experiences is brought from one place to another. Ezekiel now stands in the inner court, where was the altar, in front of the temple, while the 'glory' fills the temple itself.

6. While the angel stands by Ezekiel, the divine voice is heard out of the temple (in Revelation, it is the angel who speaks throughout).

7. An emphatic assertion that Yahweh will not again leave his temple. The Hebrew text implies some such expression as 'hast thou seen' instead of 'this is'; the sense is the same.

my holy name: Yahweh's name is the fullness of his attributes as revealed to men; 'holy' because divine (cf. Introd., p. 36), and therefore not to be treated as if belonging to ordinary men.

their kings. The attitude of Ezekiel to the royal house recalls that of the older prophets of the northern kingdom, especially Elijah and Elisha; Isaiah had lived in close relations with Hezekiah, and Zedekiah had done his feeble best for Jeremiah. For these 'profane' royal burials, cf. 1 Kings ii. 10, xi. 43;

their high places; in their setting of their threshold by 8
my threshold, and their door post beside my door post,
and there was *but* the wall between me and them; and
they have defiled my holy name by their abominations
which they have committed: wherefore I have consumed
them in mine anger. Now let them put away their 9
whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me,
and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

Thou, son of man, shew the house to the house of 10
Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities:
and let them measure the pattern. And if they be 11
ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto

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2 Kings xxi. 18, 26; also Isa. xiv. 18. They were on the south-west of the temple-hill (Neh. iii. 16). In olden times, graves did not pollute: cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 1; 1 Kings ii. 34.

in their high places: a reference to these shrines is here out of place; unless the words are a gloss due to a scribe who did not understand the reason of Ezekiel's indignation, the reading of R. V. marg., 'in their death,' is to be preferred.

8. This refers to the arrangements of Solomon's temple and palace; see note on xlii. 20.

9. This profaning proximity, which was at first quite innocent in intention, and for which Solomon is never blamed, is to Ezekiel 'whoredom,' like the idolatrous practices of chapters viii, ix.

xliii. 10–12. *Summary of the Message which the Prophet is to carry to Israel.* The mere sight of the plan of the house, with all the horror of profanation which its symmetrical measurements imply, ought to be enough to cause them shame for the past. Their shame, if they feel it, will privilege them to learn the details of the 'house' and its ritual, that so they may be preserved, by obedience, from further possibilities of driving Yahweh from their midst. The chief point to be maintained is the holiness of the whole space at the summit of the hill.

10. let them measure: LXX alters to 'and the appearance and its arrangement,' parallel to 'the house.' The 'house' has already been measured; but that is no reason why the people should not work out the measures for themselves. For this shame, cf. xxxvi. 32, xliv. 6, 7, and chaps. viii, ix. Was ever a Utopia so introduced?

11. The four-times-repeated 'forms' must be wrong; the LXX, however, is not less pleonastic (cf. verse 3, note).

them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight: that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

12 This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

13 And these are the measures of the altar by cubits:

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12. This is the law of ...: the usual formula in the Priests' code (Lev. vi. 9, vii. 1, xi. 46; Num. v. 29, vi. 21, &c.), though it does not occur in Deuteronomy or in the 'Law of Holiness.'

xliii. 13–17. *The Dimensions of the Great Altar.* These are not actually given as Yahweh's words, nor, as in chaps. xl–xlii, as dimensions taken by the angel.

Solomon's temple had contained the bronze altar (1 Kings viii. 64) of burnt offering: the material was an innovation, through the influence of the Phoenician Huram-Abi. This was set aside in favour of a new Assyrian model by Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 10 ff.). The measurements are given in 2 Chron. iv. 1 as twenty cubits in length and width (it would have occupied the whole floor-space of Ezekiel's inner shrine), and ten cubits in height. In Exod. xx. 24, the altar is to be of earth, or, at most, of unhewn stones; to use an iron tool on it is pollution. Ezekiel does not mention the material of his altar, but there can be no doubt that it is to be built of stone, and the precision with which he describes it implies that it is completely different from the old altar. The altar was the first thing set up by the returning exiles (Ezra iii. 2). At Taanach an altar of baked earth has been recently discovered, decorated with figures of winged creatures like sphinxes or cherubs.

13. the altar: already mentioned in xl. 47. Its consecration is the type and completion of that of the whole building. The difficulties of the text are due largely to the obscurity of the technical terms translated 'bottom,' 'border,' 'settle.' The general shape, however, is clear: the altar is composed of four square stones, one above another, decreasing in extent and increasing in thickness. The highest is a square of twelve cubits, and the height of the tip of the horns at each corner from the ground (reckoning the horns as each one cubit high) is also twelve cubits, or about twenty-one feet; the steps by which it is approached are mentioned in verse 17.

(the cubit is a cubit and an handbreadth:) the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about a span: and this shall be the base of the altar. And from the bottom 14

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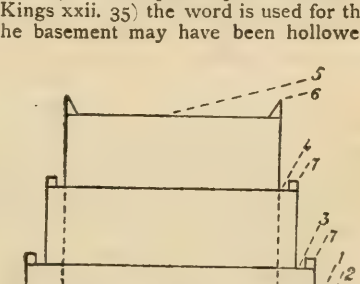
a cubit and an handbreadth: cf. xl. 5.

the bottom (see Plan E), literally 'bosom,' is variously interpreted as a 'channel' (Smend), or more probably as a basement (Cornill). Elsewhere (1 Kings xxii. 35) the word is used for the interior of a chariot. The basement may have been hollowed



1. Bosom, xliii. 13.
2. Border, xliii. 13.
3. Lower or lesser settle, xliii. 14.
4. Greater settle, xliii. 15.
5. Upper altar, xliii. 15.
6. Horns, xliii. 15.
7. Borders implied in xliii. 17.

PLAN E. SECTION OF ALTAR.

out; but the 'border' (*vid. infr.*) would be enough to give it a hollowed appearance. It is a cubit thick, and projects a cubit each way beyond the stone placed on it.

the border: used of land or territory (e. g. Job xxxviii. 20; Mal. i. 4), and of the 'barriers' in the gate-house in xl. 12. Here a rim of a span, or half a cubit, running along the edge of the possibly hollowed 'bottom.' Kraetzschmar holds that 'border' cannot be used of what is vertical, and so regards the surface of the 'bottom' as being hollowed next to the stone lying on it, and as having a flat portion, the 'border,' next the outside edge. According to tradition a subterranean channel conveyed the blood from this hollow to the Kidron.

the base: the same word is used in xvi. 24, 31—'an eminent place'; it is used, chiefly in late Hebrew, for anything convex—of the back of a man or the boss of a shield. 'Bottom' and 'border' make up the base of the altar proper.

upon the ground to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth
15 a cubit. And the upper altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar hearth and upward there shall be four
16 horns. And the altar hearth shall be twelve *cubits* long
17 by twelve broad, square in the four sides thereof. And the settle shall be fourteen *cubits* long by fourteen broad in the four sides thereof; and the border about it shall

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14. The next stone is two cubits thick, and projects from the stone above it one cubit; the next stone is four cubits thick, and projects one cubit. The word translated 'settle' elsewhere means a court or enclosure. Toy and the Oxford Lexicon translate 'ledge'; and this agrees with the text, which speaks of the breadth of the 'ledge,' but of the height from one 'ledge' to another. The allied Assyrian root is said to mean 'narrowing.' 'The lesser settle' is so called because less in thickness.

15. upper altar, i. e. the topmost stone. This too is four cubits thick, and at each corner are horns; the altar within the temple has 'corners,' not horns. The words translated 'upper altar' and 'altar hearth' (*harel* and *ariel*) are probably the same, 'hearth of God.' The latter form occurs in Mesha's inscription; it has no etymological connexion with 'ariel,' 'lion of God,' in Isa. xxix. 1.

horns. LXX gives their height as a cubit. Horns are mentioned in connexion with the Davidic altar in 1 Kings i. 50, ii. 28. These passages, with Amos iii. 14, would imply that they formed a peculiarly sacred part of the altar. They may be a survival of the same feeling which prompted the worship of a bull image of Yahweh in the northern kingdom (1 Kings xii. 28); Ezekiel, ignoring their idolatrous associations, retains them like the pillars (xl. 49). The oldest altars, simply built of unhewn stone, would seem to have possessed no horns (Exod. xx. 25).

17. the settle, i. e. the stone below the 'harel'; its breadth (in verse 14, one cubit) is now measured from side to side, i. e. fourteen cubits (1 + 12 + 1). We should have expected also a mention of the 'lesser' settle. The 'harel' is thus a square of twelve cubits and the 'base' of eighteen cubits; the same proportion (2 : 3) is preserved in the temple. Kliefoth and Cornill hold that the altar was really a cube, and that the ledges were the terminations of side-walls; this is far less simple, and involves violence to the text.

be half a cubit; and the bottom thereof shall be a cubit about; and the steps thereof shall look toward the east.

18 And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD: These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. 19 Thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which are near unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.

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the border about it implies that each ledge had a hollow or rim like the 'bottom.'

the steps. In Exod. xx. 25 'steps' are prohibited. They are so arranged that in approaching the altar one faces the temple. The description of the altar in the Priests' code is given briefly in Exod. xxvii. 1–8; it is but three cubits high.

xliii. 18–27. *The Consecration of the Altar.* This is really the consecration of the whole temple: cf. Exod. xxix. 38–46; Lev. viii, where seven days' sacrifices are contemplated (so verse 26). The Priests' code pays far more attention to the consecration of the priests, which is not mentioned by Ezekiel. Nothing of this kind is said to have taken place at the dedication of Solomon's temple. Kraetzschmar, observing the changes from second sing. to third plur., argues that the passage contains 'doublets' or parallel recensions, in the first of which (verse 19 to the first words of verse 22 and 23 f.) the priests act as the subordinates of Ezekiel, and in the second (parts of 22, 25, and 26 f.) the priests act together. But Ezekiel nowhere else regards himself as receiving a special commission of this kind; he is simply to direct the other priests and to act with them; Ezekiel knows nothing of any office corresponding to that of 'high-priest.' That the language is general is shown by the vague third pers. sing. in verse 21.

18. The speaker here is the angel who acts as Yahweh's spokesman. The phrase 'thus saith Yahweh God' occurs here for the first time, and, with the exception of xliv. 2 and 5, introduces each provision throughout the remainder of the book. The second half of the verse gives the two main purposes of the altar.

19. the priests the Levites: see note on xliv. 10.

sin offering. This offering is now first brought into prominence. In early Israelite religion expiatory offerings were rare. The altar needs 'atonement' (verses 20, 26) as having

20 And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on
the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle,
and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou
21 cleanse it and make atonement for it. Thou shalt also
take the bullock of the sin offering, and he shall burn it
in the appointed place of the house, without the sanc-
22 tuary. And on the second day thou shalt offer a he-goat
without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse
23 the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock. When
thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer
a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the
24 flock without blemish. And thou shalt bring them near
before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon
them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering
25 unto the LORD. Seven days shalt thou prepare every
day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare
a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without

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been previously profane; it is now made 'holy,' i. e. placed in the category of things which have a special relation to the deity; the 'sin' has thus nothing to do with moral misdeeds.

20. In Exod. xxix. 12 only the horns are sprinkled with blood; the rest is poured on the earth.

21. the appointed place. Smend would place this in the fifty-cubits-broad space round the temple enclosure (xlv. 2). Cf. Neh. iii. 31; *Miphkad* is the Hebrew expression here translated by 'the appointed place.' The sin-offering is counted as unclean, the uncleanness of the altar being regarded as transferred to it. 'He' should be rendered 'one' (cf. xlvi. 12).

22. The change of animals for the sacrifices is perhaps due to a desire for completeness.

23. The burnt offering can only take place when the sin-offering is completed. Blemish implies impurity.

24. salt: cf. Mark ix. 49. In the Priests' code salt is only used in the case of food-offerings (Lev. ii. 13) and in connexion (as in the modern Orient) with the idea of a covenant: cf. Num. xviii. 19.

25. If the expression here is precise (a goat, a bullock, and a ram each day) it must be taken as supplementing verses 19 and 22, which seems hardly probable.

blemish. Seven days shall they make atonement for the 26
altar and purify it; so shall they consecrate it. And 27
when they have accomplished the days, it shall be that
upon the eighth day, and forward, the priests shall make
your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace
offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.

Then he brought me back the way of the outer gate 44
of the sanctuary, which looketh toward the east; and it
was shut. And the LORD said unto me, This gate shall 2
be shut, it shall not be opened, neither shall any man
enter in by it, for the LORD, the God of Israel, hath
entered in by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the 3
prince, he shall sit therein as prince to eat bread before

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26. consecrate it: *lit.* 'fill its hands,' a term originally used of the priests, and pointing back to the early period when a private person hired a priest to perform the religious rites which he desired: cf. Judges xvii. 10.

27. After this dedication the ordinary sacrifices begin. The burnt-offering is placed entirely on the altar; of the peace-offering only the fat and the blood, which is still (xliv. 7) Yahweh's food.

accept, a technical term for the favour with which Yahweh receives those who come before him with due precautions to preserve their holiness.

xliv. 1–3. *The Outer Eastern Gate and the Prince.*

1. In xliii. 5 Ezekiel has been standing in the inner court; now he is led to the gate at which the angel's measurements began, and finds it shut, after Yahweh's entrance. For a similar restriction in a pagan temple, cf. 1 Sam. v. 5.

2. the LORD said unto me: see note on xliii. 18. This phrase, repeated in verse 5, appears to denote words actually used by Yahweh instead of by the angel.

3. On the 'prince,' see notes on xxxiv. 22, xxxvii. 24; here and in chap. xlvi he is the representative rather than the ruler or 'shepherd' of the people, and he is carefully shut out from exercising the old priestly functions of the kings (cf. 1 Kings viii. 22, 54, ix. 25; 2 Kings xvi. 12; Jer. xxx. 21). He does not enter through the gate-house, whose outer entrance is now closed, but from the vestibule which (xl. 8) faced inwards. To 'eat bread before Yahweh' is to partake of the sacrificial meal; the phrase is

the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of the
4 gate, and shall go out by the way of the same. Then he
brought me the way of the north gate before the house;
and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled
5 the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face. And
the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and
behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that
I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the
house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark
well the entering in of the house, with every going forth
6 of the sanctuary. And thou shalt say to the rebellious,
even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD:
O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your
7 abominations, in that ye have brought in aliens, uncir-
cumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in
my sanctuary, to profane it, even my house, when ye
offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have

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more applicable to the older Israelite custom than to Ezekiel's dispositions.

xliv. 4–14. *The Disabilities of Foreigners and Levites.*

4. Ezekiel is now brought through the north gate of the inner court (see xlvi. 1) to the front of the temple; once more Yahweh's voice is heard coming out of the temple (cf. xliii. 6).

5. This introduction emphasizes the importance of what is to follow.

6. to the rebellious: *lit.* 'to rebelliousness,' a stern echo of the frequent phrase in the earlier part of the book; not used since chap. xii, save in xvii. 12 and xxiv. 3. For the phrase 'let it suffice,' cf. xlv. 9 and 1 Pet. iv. 3.

7. In the old régime, prisoners of war would seem to have been used for temple servants (Joshua ix. 23), and foreigners were freely enlisted in the royal bodyguard (Ithra the Gittite, the Cherethites and Pelethites: cf. also 2 Kings xi. 4). For foreigners in the community, cf. Deut. xxix. 10; the 'Nethinim' were probably descended from such foreigners; Ezra ii. 43. 58; Neh. xi. 21. To be uncircumcized in flesh was, to Ezekiel, to be uncircumcized in heart; the covenant of xxxvi. 24 ff. was made only with Israel.

the fat and the blood: cf. verse 15, and see note on xliii. 27.

broken my covenant, *to add* unto all your abominations.
And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: 8
but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary
for yourselves. Thus saith the Lord GOD, No alien, 9
uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall
enter into my sanctuary, of any alien that is among the
children of Israel. But the Levites that went far from 10
me, when Israel went astray, which went astray from me

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8. The real meaning, which a slight change would place in the text, is 'ye have set them as keepers' (cf. Zech. xiv. 21).

9. This prohibition was preserved in Herod's temple by inscriptions, one of which still exists.

10. the Levites. Till now, Levites and Priests had been identified, and regarded as distinct from the rest of the nation (cf. Deut. xviii. 1, 6, xxxiii. 9). They had no tribal inheritance save the revenues of the priesthood (cf. xliv. 28), and it is doubtful whether, originally, officiating priests or Levites were restricted to any one tribe (cf. Judges xvii, xix; in 2 Sam. viii. 18, David's sons are 'priests'); the original tribe almost lost its separate existence (Gen. xlix. 7). In Deuteronomy, the distinction is not between priests and Levites (all legitimate priests are Levitical, Deut. xviii. 1; 1 Kings xii. 31 : cf. Joshua iii. 3), but between the city 'clergy' and the country 'clergy'; the latter, dispossessed from their 'cures' by the abolition of the country shrines, are to gain priestly rights as soon as they are resident in Jerusalem (Deut. xviii. 6 : cf. xxxi. 9, 25). This arrangement would not be likely to meet with the approbation of the Zadokite priests in Jerusalem, established there by Solomon (verse 15 : cf. 1 Kings ii. 27, iv. 4); their pride of place was perhaps enforced by a moral superiority (though, in spite of verse 15, Ezekiel, chaps. viii–x, shows that later on worship in Jerusalem had sunk as low as was well possible); and in this section Ezekiel assigns a moral reason for an arrangement whereby, contravening Deuteronomy, the successors of the 'country clergy,' to whom he will not allow the title of priests, are to remain subordinate, performing the offices which he has taken from the foreigners (cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 9). Cf. note on xl. 45, 46; from this the Levites apparently had previously enjoyed access to all the priestly portions of the temple-building. In the Priests' code, the distinction between priests and Levites is thoroughgoing; but the legitimate priests are 'sons of Aaron,' and not simply of Zadok; Baudissin, like Dillmann (see especially *Dict. Bib.*, art. 'Priests') holds that this code is earlier than Ezekiel; but the real facts probably are, not that Ezekiel narrowed down an exist-

11 after their idols; they shall bear their iniquity. Yet
they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight
at the gates of the house, and ministering in the house:
they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the
people, and they shall stand before them to minister
12 unto them. Because they ministered unto them before
their idols, and became a stumblingblock of iniquity unto
the house of Israel; therefore have I lifted up mine hand
against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear
13 their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me,
to execute the office of priest unto me, nor to come near
to any of my holy things, unto the things that are most
holy: but they shall bear their shame, and their abomina-
14 tions which they have committed. Yet will I make them
keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service
thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.
15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that

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ing arrangement, but that Ezekiel's arrangement had, by the time of Ezra, proved unworkably narrow. Cf. Num. xvii. 2–5, xviii. 2, 3.[1]

11. These disestablished priests have, like the Zadokites, two sets of duties, outer and inner. In the Priests' code, the animals are slain either by the priests or by the offerer (Lev. i. 5, iii. 8), not by the Levites; in Chronicles (2 Chron. xxix. 34, xxx. 17) the Levites help to kill the sacrifices. In xlvi. 2, the priests kill the offerings of the prince; also the sin- and guilt-offerings.

13. most holy, *lit.* 'the holy of the holy things': cf. note on xli. 4.

14. Cf. note on xl. 45.

xliv. 15-27. *The Restrictions and Duties which concern the Zadokite Priests.* These restrictions are of the nature of 'taboos'; in all early religions, the more important a person is (especially as priest or king, or as being at some crisis of life) the greater

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[1] See also article 'PRIEST' (Robertson Smith and Cheyne) in *Enc. Bibl.* The arguments for the traditional view (that high-priest, priests, and Levites were distinct from the time of Moses) will be found in Orr, *The Problem of the O. T.*, pp. 181 ff., 316 ff.

kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me; and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come 16
near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. And it shall be that when they enter 17
in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them,

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number of the things he may not do or touch, on pain of incurring or causing some penalty natural or supernatural. Other things are restricted to priests, kings, &c.—i. e. they are 'taboo' to ordinary people. The 'Flamen Dialis' of Rome, for example, was surrounded by a whole network of 'taboos.' The general notion of 'taboo' thus gives rise to the notions both of the holy and the unclean. The origins of these feelings of horror at certain actions and objects are generally very obscure; in Israel the resulting traditional prohibitions were to a certain extent capable of modification, and they often seem to aim at either hygiene or distinction from similar heathen practices.[1]

15. See note on verse 10. Zadok had held to Solomon while Abiathar fell off to Adonijah (1 Kings i. 25, ii. 26). Jeremiah himself came from the country priesthood, at Anathoth. The older priestly family of Eli would seem to have been previously set aside.

16. my table: Smend and Bertholet interpret this of the table of shewbread: cf. note on xli. 22; but from xl. 46 it seems better to identify it with the altar of burnt offering, as verse 15 also implies (so Davidson and Kraetzschmar).

17. linen: cf. ix. 2; also Dan. x. 5, xii. 6. The reason is given in the next verse; it was used also by Egyptian priests (Hdt. ii. 37). Cf. Exod. xxviii. 42, xxxix. 28; Lev. vi. 10, viii. 2; of the high-priest's clothing, of course, nothing is said; and the technical terms for the priest's clothing differ in Ezekiel and the Priests' code. This robing evidently takes place in the chambers by the inner gate-houses (xl. 44 ff.), and not in the blocks of cells (xlii. 1 ff.).

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[1] See Robertson Smith's *Rel. Sem.*, 2nd ed., pp. 152 ff., 446 ff.; Frazer's *Golden Bough*, vol. i, pp. 120 f., 170 ff.; Jevons' *Introd. to Study of Religion*, ch. v.

whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and
18 within. They shall have linen tires upon their heads,
and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they
shall not gird themselves with *any thing that causeth*
19 sweat. And when they go forth into the outer court,
even into the outer court to the people, they shall put off
their garments wherein they minister, and lay them in
the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments,
that they sanctify not the people with their garments.
20 Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their
locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.

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18. sweat: the word occurs nowhere else, but is apparently identical in meaning, as almost in form, with that which occurs in Gen. iii. 19. A similar dread of sweat was felt in Egypt.

19. Cf. xlii. 14. For this change of clothing, cf. Gen. xxxv. 2; Exod. xix. 10; 2 Kings x. 22; also Isa. lxv. 5; Hag. ii. 12; Exod. xxx. 29; Lev. vi. 11; Mark v. 28; Acts xix. 12, and the elaborate 'vestments' of the Catholic Church.

that they sanctify not: a 'layman,' touched by what belonged to priests, would be made 'holy,' i. e. subjected to priestly restrictions (cf. xlvi. 20; Exod. xxix. 37; Lev. vi. 27). This conception of 'holiness' as an almost physical contagion is widespread in early religions; but it is transformed when, as in Israel, it is centred in Yahweh as its source. Robertson Smith (*op. cit.*, p. 451) gives instances (from Arabia and New Zealand) which show that clothes worn at a ceremony in a holy place could not be used again. After an examination of the remains of very early Semitic worship at the temple of Serabit-Ishtar on the Sinai peninsula, Flinders Petrie says, 'We see how much of Mosaism was a carrying on of older ritual; and how that movement was a monotheistic reformation of existing rites.'

20. Baldness is a sign of mourning (vii. 18). The Nazirites let their hair grow long: cf. 1 Sam. i. 11; Num. vi. 5. If cut off or allowed to grow too long the hair might be polluted. Lev. xix. 27 prohibits this hair-cutting, mentioning also the beard, to the laity as well, while it is the high-priest alone (Lev. xxi. 5, 10) who may not have long hair. The prohibition is probably a protest against heathen customs (cf. Deut. xiv. 1), the hair being the symbol of the worshipper's life (see Rob. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 323, 481 ff.). All Egyptians of position were shaved.

Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into 21
the inner court. Neither shall they take for their wives 22
a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take
virgins of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow
that is the widow of a priest. And they shall teach my 23
people the difference between the holy and the common,
and cause them to discern between the unclean and the
clean. And in a controversy they shall stand to judge; 24
according to my judgements shall they judge it: and
they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my ap-
pointed feasts; and they shall hallow my sabbaths. And 25
they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves:
but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter,
for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband,
they may defile themselves. And after he is cleansed, 26

21. Wine was a distinctively Canaanite product. Cf. Lev. x. 9; also Amos ii. 12; Jer. xxxv. 6.

22. Later, the restriction to marriage with only Israelite women was extended to the whole community (Ezra ix. 12; Neh. x. 30). The further restriction in the case of widows is applied only to the high-priest in Lev. xxi. 13.

23. This 'instruction' had always formed a large part of the duty of the priests, and would be the more important while a written law was unknown.

24. The LXX adds 'in a matter of life and death.' Previously the kings had been judges (cf. 1 Kings iii. 16 ff.). In Deuteronomy some 'controversies' had been assigned to the priests (xvii. 8, xix. 17, xxi. 5); others, connected with the family, to the 'elders of the city' (xxi. 19, xxii. 15). The perfect obedience to Yahweh in the new state does not render disagreements impossible; but Ezekiel is thinking here of the general duties of the priests as he holds that they ought to be.

hallow, i. e. arrange generally: cf. xx. 12, xxii. 8, xlvi. 1.

25. A protest against the cult of the dead, to whom the hair cut off at funerals was offered. The omission of the wife is noteworthy (so Lev. xxi. 1-3); relationship is still governed by blood. For 'sister that hath had no husband,' cf. verse 22. 'Defile themselves,' i.e. by touching the dead. In Lev. xxi. 11 the high-priest is forbidden to go near any dead body. See also Num. xix. 14.

26. The length of time he is to remain impure before the further

27 they shall reckon unto him seven days. And in the
day that he goeth into the sanctuary, into the inner
court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin
28 offering, saith the Lord GOD. And they shall have an
inheritance; I am their inheritance: and ye shall give
them no possession in Israel; I am their possession.
29 They shall eat the meal offering, and the sin offering,
and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel
30 shall be theirs. And the first of all the firstfruits of

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seven days' 'quarantine' begins is not stated; it was perhaps the ordinary seven days of Num. xix. 11.

sin offering: cf. xliii. 26. In priestly language the purely ritual misdemeanour of touching a corpse is a 'sin'; hence, piacular sacrifices are not necessarily connected with wilful wrong-doing: cf. xlv. 20, and Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

xliv. 28–31. *The Revenues of the Priests.* For this list of dues, the 'Tariff of Marseilles,' a Phoenician inscription containing the dues of the temple there, may be compared (see Cooke's *North Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 113). The Babylonian temples had also their stated revenues, either in food or money, in addition to which they often had large private estates (like mediaeval abbeys) and did much banking business. (See Johns's *Babylonian Laws, Contracts, and Letters.*)

28. Since no distinction can be made between 'inheritance' and 'possession' a negative seems wanting in the first clause. The words 'I am their possession' refer to verses 29, 30; xlv. 1–8 (cf. xlviii. 10) involves an apparent infraction of this principle. Cf. Jos. xiii. 14; Deut. xviii. 1; Lev. vii. 31; Num. xviii. 20; for earlier times, 1 Sam. ii. 13–16. The tithe is referred to in Amos iv. 4, and developed in Num. xviii. 21 ff. Ezekiel does not mention it, though, since it is ordained in Deut. xii. 6 ff., xiv. 23, he must have known of it.

29. For the meal offering, cf. 1 Sam. xxi. 6; 2 Kings xxiii. 9; and for the sin- and guilt-offerings, 2 Kings xii. 16, and Ezek. xl. 39; also Lev. vi. 20, vii. 5; Num. xviii. 9. Previous to Ezekiel, these latter had been money-fines. 'They' is here emphatic, as if the point had previously been doubtful. The 'devoted thing' was that on which a 'ban' or 'taboo' had been placed: cf. Josh. vii. 1, 15; 1 Sam. xv. 3; also Lev. xxvii. 28; Num. xviii. 14.

30. Only the best of the first-fruits is for the priest; the rest is for the offerer: cf. Exod. xxiii. 16, 19; Deut. xii. 6, xviii. 4.

every thing, and every oblation of every thing, of all your oblations, shall be for the priests: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, to cause a blessing to rest on thine house. The priests shall not eat of any 31
thing that dieth of itself, or is torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for **45**
inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand *reeds*, and the breadth shall be ten thousand: it shall be holy in all the border thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the holy 2

Later (Num. xviii. 12, 13) the entire oblation goes to the priests; larger provisions would be needed for the priests when a costly ritual had to be maintained in a feeble community. In 1 Sam. ii. 13 ff. there is no law for these free-will offerings.

dough: the term is obscure, and is otherwise explained as course meal or a kneading-trough.

31. Cf. iv. 14. In Ex. xxii. 31; Deut. xiv. 21; Lev. xxii. 8. This rule applies to the whole community; in Lev. xvii. 15 a transgression of it involves a day's uncleanness. Ezekiel mentions no penalties, nor does he seem to contemplate the possibility of disobedience.

xlv. 1-8. *The Estates of the Priests* (verses 1-4), *the Levites* (5), *the City* (6), *and the Prince* (7, 8): cf. xlviii. 8 ff. In accordance with Ezekiel's symmetrical conception of the holiness alike of temple and of land, the temple is to be exactly in the centre of the land; around it the priests are to have their estates; together these will occupy a rectangle of 25,000 × 10,000 cubits; north are the Levitical estates of an equal area; south a rectangle 25,000 × 5,000 cubits is given up to the city and the lands assigned to it, in the centre of which is the city itself, and the open spaces round it (a square of 5,000 cubits), and on either sides are its fields. Thus the whole forms a square of which each side is 25,000 cubits, or about $8\frac{1}{3}$ miles. On either side, to the east and west limits of the land, lie the prince's estates. North are seven of the tribes; south five. See Plan F, p. 349.

1. oblation is the term used for both portions of the priests' revenues, including the temple itself (cf. xliv. 28).

ten thousand should be, as LXX, 20,000 (see verse 5, xlviii. 13).

place five hundred *in length* by five hundred *in breadth*,
square round about; and fifty cubits for the suburbs
3 thereof round about. And of this measure shalt thou
measure, a length of five and twenty thousand, and
a breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanc-
4 tuary, which is most holy. It is an holy portion of the
land; it shall be for the priests, the ministers of the
sanctuary, which come near to minister unto the LORD;
and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy
5 place for the sanctuary. And five and twenty thousand
in length, and ten thousand in breadth, shall be unto the
Levites, the ministers of the house, for a possession unto
6 themselves, *for* twenty chambers. And ye shall appoint
the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five
and twenty thousand long, side by side with the oblation
of the holy portion: it shall be for the whole house of
7 Israel. And *whatsoever is* for the prince *shall be* on the

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2. suburbs means open space or 'commons,' outside the temple-walls, so that the agriculture even of the priests does not touch these.

4. This verse refers immediately to verse 1, which Cornill would make it follow. The R.V. conceals the tautology of the Hebrew of the last clause, 'and a sanctuary for the sanctuary'; for the first word 'suburbs' (as in verse 2) can easily be substituted.

5. For the obscure 'twenty chambers' LXX reads 'cities to dwell in': cf. Num. xxxv. 2; Joshua xiv. 4, xxi. 2. Kautzsch reads 'twenty cities,' in contrast to Joshua xxi. 4–7 and Num. xxxv. 7, where the number is forty-eight. In Numbers the cities are scattered up and down the country; and some of the cities did not come into the possession of Israel till late. Before the exile the Levites, like the strangers, are commended to public charity (Deut. xii. 12, xiv. 27, &c.).

6. Members of all the tribes will dwell in the capital.

7. *whatsoever is* **for the prince.** This expression hardly does justice to the large and definite demesne. 'Ezekiel does not show the road to Canossa' (Skinner); but the civil or political sphere in which the prince will be supreme must be very rigidly limited (cf. even xliv. 24; contrast Amos vii. 13).

one side and on the other side of the holy oblation and of the possession of the city, in front of the holy oblation and in front of the possession of the city, on the west side westward, and on the east side eastward: and in length answerable unto one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border. In the land it shall 8 be to him for a possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; but they shall give the land to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: Let it suffice you, O 9 princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgement and justice; take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD. Ye shall have just 10 balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah 11 and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath

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8. my princes: apparently a succession is expected here: cf. note on xxxiv. 23. For 'they shall give' (a proceeding of the possibility of which these chapters contain no hint elsewhere) LXX reads 'the house of Israel shall inherit the land.'

xlv. 9–17. *Duties and Rights of the Prince.* In chap. xxxiv Ezekiel had contrasted the Oriental oppressions of the kings with the protecting rule of the coming shepherd; here he is thinking more of the necessity of guarding against oppression in the future; hence the different attitude towards the 'prince,' whose wealth will be needed because of the large offerings he will have to make as the people's representative (verse 17).

9. exactions, or, as R. V. marg., 'expulsions': cf. 1 Kings xxi. 1–16; Isa. v. 8; Mic. ii. 9.

10. This would seem to imply the absence or scarcity of coined money: cf. Jer. xxxii. 9. Fraudulent weights and measures constituted a social and commercial evil against which all parts of the O.T. protest: cf. Amos viii. 5; Hos. xii. 7; Mic. vi. 10; Deut. xxv. 13; Lev. xix. 35; Prov. xi. 1, xvi. 11, xx. 10.

just: the root of 'justice' or 'righteousness' signifies the 'condition or disposition which corresponds to an objective norm' (Kautzsch); hence it can be applied either to a balance or to Yahweh.

11. These definitions of old measures are given to avoid the capricious alterations of the kings in times past. In later times.

may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah
the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be
12 after the homer. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs:
twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels,
13 shall be your maneh. This is the oblation that ye shall
offer; the sixth part of an ephah from an homer of
wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah
14 from an homer of barley: and the set portion of oil,
of the bath of oil, shall be the tenth part of a bath out of
the cor, *which is* ten baths, even an homer; for ten baths
15 are an homer: and one lamb of the flock, out of two

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also, sovereigns have found no more tempting or more disastrous way of increasing their revenues than by debasing the coinage. The ephah and the bath were each the tenth of a homer, the former for dry, the latter for liquid measures. The homer was approximately equal to eleven bushels and ninety gallons.

12. The money shekel approximately equals 2*s.* 6*d.*; half and quarter shekels are mentioned. In Exod. xxx. 13, Lev. xxvii. 25, Num. iii. 47, xviii. 16 the shekel of twenty gerahs is further defined as 'the shekel of the sanctuary'; the absence of the mention of the 'gerah' previously would imply that it was still a new coin (cf. note on iv. 10).

The second half of the verse is meaningless. Read, with LXX (Alex.), 'five (shekels) shall be five, and ten shekels ten, and fifty shekels shall be your mina': i. e. no one shall take more than a shekel for a shekel. In both the Phoenician and Babylonian systems the mina contained sixty shekels when used for ordinary purposes, and fifty shekels when used for precious metals (a sort of 'Troy' measure); and the identity of the amount of Hezekiah's indemnity to Sennacherib, as recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 14, with the Assyrian record confirms the probability that Hebrew and Babylonian measures would coincide.

13. As verse 16 explains, this commences the account of the revenues of the prince, to which, as being an indirect tithe, the term 'oblation' is applied. All these contributions are to be paid in kind. Nehemiah imposed a poll-tax of $\frac{1}{3}$ shekel (Neh x. 32), the Priests' code, $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel (Exod. xxx. 11–16).

14. The homer and the cor are identical (see 1 Kings iv. 22, v. 11; 2 Chron. ii. 10, xxvii. 5); the bath is thus equal to the ephah. The amounts to be paid were 1% of oil, $1\frac{2}{3}$% of wheat and barley, and $\frac{1}{2}$% of the lambs.

hundred, from the fat pastures of Israel; for a meal
offering and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings,
to make atonement for them, saith the Lord GOD. All 16
the people of the land shall give unto this oblation for
the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part to 17
give the burnt offerings, and the meal offerings, and the
drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and
in the sabbaths, in all the appointed feasts of the house
of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meal
offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings,
to make atonement for the house of Israel.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: In the first *month*, in the 18
first *day* of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock
without blemish; and thou shalt cleanse the sanctuary.

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15. fat pastures, *lit.* 'well-watered'; what, then, of the rest? LXX, with slight change, reads 'out of all the families of Israel.'

17. The kings had been accustomed to provide the public offerings (2 Sam. xxiv. 24; 1 Kings viii. 63, ix. 25; 2 Kings xvi. 13). Ezekiel is silent as to private sacrifices, as Deuteronomy is silent as to public sacrifices.

atonement: see notes on verse 20 and xliv. 27.

xlv. 18–25. *The Half-yearly Festivals; the Passover and the Harvest.* The year is divided into two halves, each of which begins with a day of atonement (contrast Lev. xvi), which, after an interval of fourteen days, is followed by a seven days' festival, Passover (first month), and Booths (seventh month). The Babylonian year began in the spring; the Hebrew year here begins at the same time. In Ezekiel the festivals lose all their old character, partly surviving in Deut. xvi, of agricultural rejoicings, and Whitsuntide ('Weeks') drops out altogether, though it occurs in both Exod. xxiii. 16; Deut. xvi. 10; and the Priests' code. In each case the stated offerings differ from the parallel offerings in the Priests' code; sometimes one, sometimes the other is more costly. Like the Priests' code, but unlike the earlier legislation, Ezekiel fixes his festivals by the days of the month; on the other hand, he is never in direct contradiction to Deuteronomy, and he assigns as the length of his festivals, not eight days (as the Priests' code), but seven (as Deuteronomy: cf. also 1 Kings viii. 66; 2 Chron. vii. 9; Neh. viii. 18).

19 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering,
and put it upon the door posts of the house, and upon
the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the
20 posts of the gate of the inner court. And so thou shalt
do on the seventh *day* of the month for every one that
erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye make
21 atonement for the house. In the first *month*, in the
fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover,
a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.
22 And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself
and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin
23 offering. And the seven days of the feast he shall
prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and
seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and
24 a he-goat daily for a sin offering. And he shall prepare

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19. the priest who happens to be officiating. In spite of Ezekiel's silence on the high-priest (an official who does not seem to be mentioned before Haggai), there was already a chief priest in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings xii. 9, xxv. 18). The 'gate' will be presumably the east gate.

20. the seventh *day* **of the month:** this could hardly be, even if only for the sake of unintentional misdemeanours; why so soon after the first? The LXX reads, rightly, 'on the first day of the seventh month.' In spite of all precautions there may be error or misunderstanding; Ezekiel does not mention wilful sins. But the atonement is made, not directly for such error, but for the ceremonial impurity thus caused to the temple (an idea not found in Lev. xvi): cf. xliv. 27.

21. In Exod. xxxiv. 18, this month, according to the older reckoning, is called Abib, the seventh month; its later name was Nisan; and it corresponds to our March–April. We should probably read here 'fifteenth' for 'fourteenth,' as in verse 25, the fourteenth being introduced from H (Lev. xxiii. 5; see p. 31) and the Priests' code (Exod. xii. 18; Num. xxviii. 16); 'unleavened bread,' originally the chief feature of the festival, receives only a cursory mention.

23. A sin-offering at the Passover is new; the burnt-offering is surprisingly large; in Num. xxviii. 19, only two bulls, one goat, seven lambs; but Ezekiel has great faith in the fertility of the land.

a meal offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for
a ram, and an hin of oil to an ephah. In the seventh 25
month, in the fifteenth day of the month, in the feast,
shall he do the like the seven days; according to the sin
offering, according to the burnt offering, and according
to the meal offering, and according to the oil.

Thus saith the Lord GOD: The gate of the inner court 46
that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working
days; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened, and in
the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the 2
prince shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate
without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the
priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace

Neither Ezekiel nor Lev. xxiii contains any historical reference to the Passover, nor mentions the Passover lamb. For 'Weeks' there is no historical reference in the O.T. The Priests' code also provides for a ceremony in private houses, and takes account of slaves and sojourners.

25. the feast: i. e. the special or most prominent feast in the second half of the year (Judges xxi. 19; 1 Kings viii. 2, xii. 32); the great 'harvest-home'; apparently, this being a popular festival, Ezekiel refers to it hurriedly, not mentioning the 'booths.' In H (Lev. xxiii. 36) and the Priests' code (Num. xxix. 35) an eighth day is added. The Passover was originally a nomadic festival, which in later times became increasingly ecclesiastical. The old rule, that the people should appear three times a year before Yahweh (Exod. xxiii. 14, 17), is unmentioned.

xlvi. 1-7. *Sabbath and New-moon Festivals.* Sabbath and new-moon are mentioned together, 2 Kings iv. 23; Hos. ii. 11; Amos viii. 5; Isa. i. 13 (cf. xlv. 17). See note on xx. 12.

1. The outer east gate was always to be shut (xliv. 2); the inner is to remain open on Sabbaths and new-moons till the evening.

2. The prince may not pass beyond the inner gate into the inner court. He is to enter its vestibule, which faced the outer court, and stand on the threshold, immediately opposite the altar, watching the offering of his sacrifice. This is in sharp contrast to the practice of the earlier kings (1 Kings viii. 22; 2 Kings xvi. 12, 18. xxiii. 3): cf. xliv. 3.

offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate; then he shall go forth: but the gate shall not be
3 shut until the evening. And the people of the land shall worship at the door of that gate before the LORD in the
4 sabbaths and in the new moons. And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD shall be in the sabbath day six lambs without blemish and a ram without
5 blemish; and the meal offering shall be an ephah for the ram, and the meal offering for the lambs as he is able to
6 give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. And in the day of the new moon it shall be a young bullock without blemish; and six lambs, and a ram; they shall be
7 without blemish: and he shall prepare a meal offering, an ephah for the bullock, and an ephah for the ram, and for the lambs according as he is able, and an hin of oil
8 to an ephah. And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of the gate, and he shall go
9 forth by the way thereof. But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the appointed feasts,

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3. The worshippers are to stand at the outer entrance of the inner gate; they would thus be able to see through to the altar.

4. The six lambs correspond to the six working-days, the ram to the seventh; in Num. xxviii. 9 two lambs alone are mentioned.

5. The 'hin' is a sixth of the 'bath' (see xlv. 14).

6. For the new-moon festival, cf. 1 Sam. xx. 5 ff.; the day on which the new moon becomes visible is marked by the sabbath offering—one bullock; in Num. xxviii. 11 ff. the offering is larger, and a sin-offering and a drink-offering are added.

xlvi. 8-10. *The Passing in and out of the Worshippers.* The spaces being comparatively small (see note on xlii. 20) it was necessary to avoid inconvenient and unseemly crowding or loitering when the populace assembled in large numbers. We cannot suppose with Hengstenberg that Ezekiel wished to teach the spiritual lesson of Phil. iii. 13.

8. The prince must go out of the inner gate as he comes in, not passing through the forbidden inner court.

9. the appointed feasts: the special reference is naturally to

he that entereth by the way of the north gate to worship shall go forth by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth straight before him. And the prince, when they go in, shall go 10
in in the midst of them; and when they go forth, they shall go forth *together*. And in the feasts and in the 11
solemnities the meal offering shall be an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. And 12
when the prince shall prepare a freewill offering, a burnt offering or peace offerings as a freewill offering unto the LORD, one shall open for him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he doth on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate. And thou shalt prepare a lamb of the 13

those which are detailed in xlv. 18–25. Here the gates are the outer gates only: cf. verse 3.

10. The reading of R. V. marg., 'he shall go forth,' is to be preferred; R. V. has inserted 'together' to avoid what is meaningless as it stands. At these 'appointed feasts' the privileges of the prince (verse 2) are in abeyance. The Syriac reads, 'the prince in their midst may return by the same gate by which he entered' (i. e. entering with one group, leaving with another), thus arriving, as it seems, at a mistaken consistency with verse 8.

xlvi. 11–15. *The remaining Regulations as to Offerings.*

11. Cf. xlv. 24, xlvi. 7. There is no mention of a lamb in chap. xlv. It would appear that the daily burnt offering of a lamb (verse 13) goes on just the same at the feasts.

12. These free-will offerings are apart from any fixed law: cf. Amos iv. 5; Deut. xii. 6; Num. xv. 3; and Lev. vii. 16 ff. (which ordains that such a sacrifice is to be eaten without delay). On such an occasion the east inner gate is to be opened for the prince, as on a Sabbath or new moon, and closed directly afterwards. The people do not make offerings except through the prince.

13. thou: here and in verse 14 LXX reads 'he,' of the prince,

first year without blemish for a burnt offering unto the LORD daily: morning by morning shalt thou prepare it.
14 And thou shalt prepare a meal offering with it morning by morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to moisten the fine flour; a meal offering unto the LORD continually by a perpetual
15 ordinance. Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meal offering, and the oil, morning by morning, for a continual burnt offering.
16 Thus saith the Lord GOD: If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, it is his inheritance, it shall belong

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who has to provide the sacrifices; or, as in verse 15, 'they,' of the priests, who see to their being offered. The institution of the daily sacrifice is referred to in 1 Kings xviii. 29 and (with an evening sacrifice also) in 2 Kings xvi. 15. Num. xxviii. 3, 4 mentions the two daily sacrifices, both of which are unmentioned in Lev. xxiii. In later times the 'daily' or 'continual' sacrifice became the characteristic feature of the temple-worship: cf. Dan. viii. 11, xi. 31, xii. 11; Heb. vii. 27, x. 11.

14. The measures in Num. xxviii. 3, 4 are one tenth (flour) and one-fourth (oil). The Babylonian system of measures was sexagesimal. The word for 'moisten' occurs only here, but seems to be connected with the word for 'drops' in Song of Songs, v. 2. 'Fine flour' replaces the ordinary flour of the older offerings (Judges vi. 19; 1 Sam. i. 24); so in the Priests' code.

As regards the people, all this worship is purely spectacular; but Ezekiel's silence must not be taken to imply the absence either of private prayer and praise or of temple-music: cf. Luke i. 10. In Ezekiel's arrangement, however, the congregation, looking through the east gate-house, must have seen very little; hence, it could hardly have been carried out. That these festivals, with their carefully-appointed sacrifices, were not felt to be formal (much less burdensome) is clear from Pss. lxxxiv, cxviii, cxxii, &c.: cf. also Acts xx. 16.

xlvi. 16-18. *Addendum on the Prince's Estate* (cf. xlv. 7). The references to the prince in the preceding verses remind the author that he has not said all that needs to be said as to his 'demesne.' Kleinert has pointed out that the directly social teaching of Ezekiel, here and in xlv. 9-12, is connected with the prince. Yahweh alone is the real lord of the land (cf. the position of

to his sons; it is their possession by inheritance. But if 17
he give of his inheritance a gift to one of his servants, it
shall be his to the year of liberty; then it shall return to
the prince; but as for his inheritance, it shall be for his
sons. Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's 18
inheritance, to thrust them out of their possession;
he shall give inheritance to his sons out of his own
possession: that my people be not scattered every man
from his possession.

Then he brought me through the entry, which was at 19
the side of the gate, into the holy chambers for the

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the Crown in English law); the exile has made possible the new division of the land, in which both swollen estates and landlessness will be impossible. Like the other prophets, he leaves off where actual legislation would have to begin.

17. No part of the estate is to pass permanently out of the possession of the family (individual ownership of land was a minor affair: cf. Num. xxvii. 1–11, xxxvi. 1–12). We are left to presume that the succession of the office would go to the firstborn (cf. Gen. xxv. 5, xlviii. 14), and therefore that the influence of the prince for the time being would always be paramount over the whole estate.

it shall return: once every seven years debts and slaves were to be released (Deut. xv. 1–18; Jer. xxxiv. 14); a release of land took place once every fifty years, at the year of jubilee (Lev. xxv. 10, xxvii. 24; Num. xxxvi. 4).

18. Cf. xlv. 8. A further sign that such acts as Ahab's (1 Kings xxi. 1–16) had left the deepest impression on the popular mind. There is much in Isaiah and Micah to show that this tyranny was not unknown in Judah: cf. Isa. v. 8; Mic. ii. 9, vi. 16. Land and citizenship went together, as in ancient Athens; cf. xlvii. 22.

xlvi. 19–24. *Addendum to the Description of the Temple.* There are two sets of kitchens; for the priests, near to the temple proper; for the people, quite distinct, in the four corners of the outer court. This section is clearly out of place, and should probably follow xlii. 14.

19. From the front of the temple (xliv. 4) Ezekiel is brought, by the northern door (xlii. 9), to the northern block of priests' cells, where the holy things are eaten (xlii. 13; Plan A, 7). The

priests, which looked toward the north: and behold,
20 there was a place on the hinder part westward. And he
said unto me, This is the place where the priests shall
boil the guilt offering and the sin offering, where they
shall bake the meal offering; that they bring them not
21 forth into the outer court, to sanctify the people. Then
he brought me forth into the outer court, and caused me
to pass by the four corners of the court; and behold, in
22 every corner of the court there was a court. In the four
corners of the court there were courts inclosed, forty
cubits long and thirty broad: these four in the corners
23 were of one measure. And there was a row *of building*
round about in them, round about the four, and it was
made with boiling places under the rows round about.
24 Then said he unto me, These are the boiling houses,
where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice
of the people.

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exact position of the 'place' is uncertain; it must have lain, however, on the north side of the 'building' (xli. 12, 13); and probably a similar kitchen would be on the south side (see Plan A, 9).

20. to sanctify the people: see note on xliv. 19.

21. These are as far as possible from the 'place' of verse 19 (Plan A, 12).

22. inclosed: the word does not occur elsewhere; the treatise *Middoth* (ii. 6) suggests 'uncovered.' LXX and Syriac translate 'small,' which is only partially appropriate (the rooms were roughly 70 × 50 ft.). The almost unintelligible word translated 'in the corners' is wanting in the LXX and omitted in the Hebrew tradition.

23. A course of square stones (cf. 1 Kings vi. 36, vii. 4, 12) was built up inside them all round their walls, at the bottom of which were recesses for the cooking fires.

24. The 'ministers of the house' are the Levites (xliv. 11). 'Sacrifice' seems here to be used generically. The sacrifices were killed at the east gate of the inner court. The prince presents these sacrifices; the people consume those portions of them which are not reserved for the priests.

And he brought me back unto the door of the house; **47**
and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold

Section III. The Land (xlvii, xlviii).

Now that the temple service is ordained, the blessing consequent thereon can flow out upon the whole land; it issues from the temple itself in the form of a stream, which quickly rises to a river, before it empties into the Dead Sea (xlvii. 1–12). Next, the frontiers of the land are marked out (xlvii. 13–23), and the whole land is divided amongst the tribes—seven tribes residing on the north of the sacred estate or 'oblation' (xlviii. 1–7); then comes the 'oblation' itself, containing both the temple and the city (xlviii. 8–22); and the remainder of the tribes on the south (xlviii. 23–29); last are mentioned the gates and the name of the city (xlviii. 30–35). The prophet here shows a disregard of material conditions, which is strange in one who had so loved 'the mountains of Israel.' The contour of the land is neglected altogether (see esp. note on xlviii. 8); the prophet, still aiming at symmetry above all things, is evidently working from a diagram (as in the case of the temple, where the elevations do not concern him), and does not stop to ask how far his new arrangement, even if it were acceptable, could be literally carried out. However they might have been impressed by the loftiness of this picture of the future, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah had to leave it entirely neglected; but to Ezekiel, in whose thought the rapture of the dreamer and the precision of the architect are combined, when the temple has once been set up in the centre of the land, nothing can hinder even the physical correspondence between the rest of the land and his conception of the chosen and eternal dwelling-place of God.

xlvii. 1–12. *The Temple Stream*: this flows from the temple in a south-easterly direction to the Dead Sea, becoming unfordable not quite a mile and a half from the temple; its fertilizing power is shown by its transformation of the Dead Sea into a lake swarming with fish and surrounded by noble trees. In its previous condition the Dead Sea could not now be tolerated. The double impossibility of the rapid rise of water in the stream, and the course of the river across the steep limestone range east of Jerusalem into the Dead Sea, does not occur to the prophet. The pool now called Hammam-esh-Shif suggests that a stream flowed west of the temple hill, and may have flowed originally within the temple enclosure, thus draining off the blood from the altar. A channel also exists on the surface of the rock itself, which was probably connected with a system of conduits: water, however, was always

of the house eastward, for the forefront of the house was
toward the east: and the waters came down from under,
from the right side of the house, on the south of the
2 altar. Then brought he me out by the way of the gate
northward, and led me round by the way without unto
the outer gate, by the way of *the gate* that looketh toward
the east; and behold, there ran out waters on the right
3 side. When the man went forth eastward with the line in
his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused
me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the
4 ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and caused me
to pass through the waters, waters that were to the knees.

---

a serious need in Jerusalem (cf. Isa. viii. 6 and the inscription in the Siloam tunnel). Southern Judah as a whole was bare and waterless (see G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog. Holy Land*, p. 307), and to a Hebrew water was always precious enough to be invested with a kind of sanctity (see Rob. Smith, *Rel. Semites*, 2nd edit., p. 183 f.: cf. Num. xxi. 17 f.; also Joel iii. 18; Zech. xiv. 8; and Rev. xxii. 1 ff.). Hence we need not ask whether Ezekiel expected a literal fulfilment of his prediction; symbol and reality (like the material and the spiritual) were not as sharply distinguished for him as for us (cf. Introd., p. 32). It was enough for him that from the temple itself would proceed a constant blessing which would ensure throughout the land all the prosperity, happiness, and peace that the life of man could desire. His whole description is given with characteristically matter-of-fact *naïveté*—it is his way of predicting that the desert should blossom as the rose.

1. The prophet stands again at the door of the temple proper; the Talmud has 'the door of the porch of the house.' The right is of course the south; the water would naturally flow eastwards, past the great altar. It was usual for the wide courts of Phoenician temples to possess fountains and conduits of water.

2. Since the east gate is shut the prophet must go round by the north to the outside of it. The water is seen gushing out on its southern side.

ran: the word occurs nowhere else; its form and a possible Assyrian cognate, as well as the rapid increase of the stream, suggest a vigorous flow.

3. the line: cf. xl. 3; this is the same word as is used in Isa. xxviii. 10. The head of the Dead Sea is sixteen miles due east of Jerusalem; the Kidron flows in a south-easterly direction.

Again he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through *the waters*, waters that were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river 5
that I could not pass through: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou 6
seen *this*? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the bank of the river. Now when I had 7
returned, behold, upon the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said 8
he unto me, These waters issue forth toward the eastern region, and shall go down into the Arabah: and they shall go toward the sea; into the sea *shall the waters go* which were made to issue forth; and the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every living 9
creature which swarmeth, in every place whither the rivers come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish: for these waters are come thither, and *the waters of the sea* shall be healed, and every thing shall live whithersoever the river cometh. And it shall come 10

---

7. After Ezekiel has marked the size of the river, its fertilizing qualities are pointed out to him. He is not actually taken more than 4,000 cubits, or about a mile and a third, from the city.

8. the Arabah is a term still used for what is now known as the 'Ghor,' the deep trench below the sea-level through which the Jordan flows from the Lake of Gennesaret to the Dead Sea, and extending to the steppes between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah at the head of the Red Sea. The 'sea' here is the Dead Sea. For 'into the sea which was made to issue forth,' a clause whose intelligibility is bought at too dear a price by the R. V.'s large insertion ('shall the waters go'), read after the Syriac and (partly) LXX 'the bitter waters.' The LXX has strangely 'the water which went forth to Galilee on the east and came down to Arabia.'

9. the rivers, *lit.*, as R. V. marg., 'the two rivers'; a mistake perhaps due to Zech. xiv. 8. At the present day all fish die on entering the Dead Sea.

to pass, that fishers shall stand by it: from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim shall be a place for the spreading of nets; their fish shall be after their kinds, as the fish of the
11 great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed; they shall
12 be given up to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for meat, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing.

13 Thus saith the Lord GOD: This shall be the border,

---

10. En-gedi is half-way along the west side of the Dead Sea, **En-eglaim** is perhaps the village of Ain-el-feshkah at the north-west end. The Moabite Eglaim (Isa. xv. 8) is different. The 'great sea' is the Mediterranean. It does not occur to Ezekiel to compare the river to 'the waters of Babylon.' The land of exile is 'not in all his thoughts.'

11. The solitary advantage of the present condition of the sea is not to be lost in the transformation of the future; salt is to be as plentiful then as now.

12. meat: i. e. 'food.' Such is the noble quality of a river whose source is in the holy soil of the temple, that the trees nourished by its streams bear fruit, and new fruit every month. For the healing properties of the leaves, cf. Rev. xxii. 2, which characteristically adds, 'for the healing of the nations.'

xlvii. 13-20. *The Frontiers of the Land.* Palestine had no fixed frontiers on the north or south; on the east the Hebrews disputed, not always successfully, for the land across the Jordan with Moab and Ammon; it was finally lost at the fall of the northern kingdom, and for the last 100 years before Ezekiel's time had probably been quite non-Hebraic. Hence, Ezekiel neglects it altogether, but makes up for its loss, and gains in symmetry, by extending Palestine as far as Hamath on the north 'an arrangement which could be no more carried out at that time than the promise of Gen. xv. 18 that the eastern frontier should rest on the Euphrates: cf. Deut. i. 7; Joshua i. 4; Isa. xxvii. 12). The delimitation is similar to that of Num. xxxiv. 1 ff., which, however, includes the territory east of Jordan. See Map.

whereby ye shall divide the land for inheritance according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph *shall have* portions.
And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another; 14
concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. And this shall be the border of the land: 15
on the north side, from the great sea, by the way of Hethlon, unto the entering in of Zedad; Hamath, 16
Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazer-hatticon,

---

13. the twelve tribes: see note on xxxvii. 15. Cf. Amos ix. 14. The last clause is out of place here; nor would Ezekiel feel the need (as a copyist might) of explaining the familiar facts that Ephraim and Manasseh were both counted as tribes, and that Levi had no territory. The word here used for 'portions,' also, is not employed by Ezekiel.

14. Cf. Gen. xii. 7, xiii. 15, xvii. 8, &c.

15. Cf. xlviii. 1. At what point on the coast does the northern boundary start? Num. xxxiv. 7 suggests 'Mount Hor'; but nothing is known of such a mountain in that region. Hethlon is either Heitela, six miles from the coast north of Tripoli, or Adlun, on the coast north of the mouth of the Kasimiye, between Zarephath and Tyre.

the entering in of Zedad: in verse 20, xlviii. 1, and Num. xxxiv. 8 the phrase is 'the entering in of Hamath'; the 'outgoing' of the border is to be at Zedad. For this phrase, cf. Joshua xiii. 5; Judges iii. 3; 1 Kings viii. 65, &c. Hamath itself was a powerful city of the Hittites on the Orontes, which fell before the Assyrians. The entrance to Hamath must be the hollow country between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or the plain at the north end of Lebanon; in which case the frontier includes the greater part of Phoenicia. David's sway is said to have actually bordered on Hamath (2 Sam. viii. 9: cf. 1 Kings viii. 65). Zedad may be Sadad, south-east of Homs.

16. On Hamath, see previous verse. Berotha is Berothai (2 Sam. viii. 8), in the kingdom of Zoba; or Bereitan, which lies on the west of Anti-Lebanon. Sibraim (Num. xxxiv. 9, Ziphron) is located between Hamath and Homs. LXX adds Eliam, which may be identical with Helam (2 Sam. x. 16), a frontier town between Israel and Syria. Hazer-hatticon, 'the middle Hazer' (R. V. marg.), must be identical with Hazar-

17 which is by the border of Hauran. And the border from
the sea shall be Hazar-enon at the border of Damascus,
and on the north northward is the border of Hamath.
18 This is the north side. And the east side, between
Hauran and Damascus and Gilead, and the land of Israel,
shall be Jordan; from the *north* border unto the east sea
19 shall ye measure. This is the east side. And the south
side southward shall be from Tamar as far as the waters of
Meriboth-kadesh, to the brook *of Egypt*, unto the great sea.
20 This is the south side southward. And the west side
shall be the great sea, from the *south* border as far as
over against the entering in of Hamath. This is the west
21 side. So shall ye divide this land unto you according to
22 the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that ye

---

enon (verse 17, xlviii. 1, and Num. xxxiv. 9), which may be Banias, or Jebel-el-Hadr, east of Banias. The frontier thus runs up to the foot of Mount Hermon. Hauran is the well-known region east of Jordan. The word is Aramaic for 'land of hollows.'

17. This verse seems to shut out the territory of Israel from that of Damascus or Hamath.

18. The eastern frontier we should have expected to start from Hazar-enon; no straight line can be drawn from Hauran to Damascus (south to north), and on from Damascus to Gilead (north-west to south-east); still less can 'the land of Israel' be added as a fourth to these three. Read 'from between Hauran and Damascus lies the b rder, and between Gilead and the land of Israel shall be the Jordan as the border.' Instead of 'shall ye measure,' read 'unto Thamar' (as verse 19). Thamar is said to have lain south-west or south of the Dead Sea.

19. Kadesh is now Ain-Kadis in the desert between Palestine and Egypt; cf. chap. xlviii. 28 and Num. xxvii. 14. 'The Brook (of Egypt)' can only be the Wadi-el-Arish. Winckler identifies the word rendered Egypt in the name of this 'Wadi' with the North Arabian Musur. The name in full occurs in Joshua xv. 4, 47; Num. xxxiv. 5; 1 Kings viii. 65; Isa. xxvii. 12, &c.: cf. also xlviii. 28.

20. As to the western frontier there could be no doubt; but Israel never made her way to the sea-coast.

22. With regard to 'strangers,' i. e. resident aliens, if they

shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you; and they shall be unto you as the homeborn among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it 23
shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.

Now these are the names of the tribes: from the north 48

---

bring up families, i. e. settle permanently in the country (and presumably are circumcised; but Ezekiel uses no word for circumcision; contrast xliv. 7), they will receive the allotment which entitles them to citizenship: cf. notes on xiv. 7, xlvi. 18. 'They shall have inheritance' is a correction for the (doubtless incorrect) punctuation 'they shall be inheritance.' A scanty population would often need thus to increase its numbers (cf. Maine, *Ancient Law*, chap. ii, 'Legal Fictions'). Deuteronomy constantly enjoins liberality to the 'strangers,' but never regards them as able to gain full citizenship (Deut. x. 18, xiv. 21, &c.). Compare also the provisions of the 'Law of Holiness,' Lev. xix. 10, xxiv. 16, &c. Corresponding to these strangers are the 'Proselytes' (Gentile members of the Jewish community) of New Testament times, who were often among the first to embrace Christianity.

xlviii. 1–7. *The Territories of the Seven Tribes North of the 'Oblation.'* As in xxxvii. 19, the twelve tribes are to be reunited; but their distribution is carried out on an entirely new principle (contrast Joshua xv–xix). Ezekiel is here quite free from conservatism; in general the Jewish legal mind is both conservative and boldly innovating. The tribes are arranged in twelve parallel strips, running from east to west, seven north and five south of the 'oblation.' Since Jerusalem was actually in the southern half of Palestine, no further thought (any more than in xlvii. 1–12) is given to the actual configuration or fertility of different parts of the country; as a matter of fact, the five southern tribes would have suffered considerably. The tribes who trace their descent from Jacob's concubines are furthest from the sanctuary, and Ephraim is put roughly in its old position; but the positions of Judah and Benjamin are interchanged, possibly in order that Palestine south of the 'oblation' might not be entirely given up to tribes tracing their descent from Leah.

Here, as in chap. xlvii and elsewhere, Ezekiel's influence on the author of the Apocalypse is strong; but there the city rather than

end, beside the way of Hethlon to the entering in of Hamath, Hazar-enan at the border of Damascus, northward beside Hamath; and they shall have their sides
2 east *and* west; Dan, one *portion*. And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side; Asher, one
3 *portion*. And by the border of Asher, from the east side
4 even unto the west side; Naphtali, one *portion*. And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west
5 side; Manasseh, one *portion*. And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side;
6 Ephraim, one *portion*. And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side; Reuben, one
7 *portion*. And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side; Judah, one *portion*.
8 And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the oblation which ye shall offer, five and twenty thousand *reeds* in breadth, and in length as one of the portions, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.
9 The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD shall be

---

the temple is the important point; and Rev. vii emphasizes, not the territory, but the number of the tribes; the author had not Ezekiel's territorial expectations for the future.

1. Ezekiel begins by recapitulating the northern frontier (cf. xlvii. 15', but the expressions are difficult; for 'beside' 'from the sea' (as xlvii. 45) should be read; and for 'they shall have their sides' it would be better to read simply, as in the following verses, 'from the east to the west, Dan one (portion).'

xlviii. 8-22. *The 'Oblation'*: cf. xlv. 1-8, and Stade's *History of Israel*, vol. ii. pp. 47-9.

8. one of the portions, i. e. of the tribes; as a matter of fact, the length of the strips would increase towards the south, as the coast slopes out westwards.

9. the oblation: see Plan F. The term is here used, in a narrower sense, of the special and middle portion of the square round the temple; it was a rectangle of just over eight miles in length by just over three in breadth, and therefore it included the

five and twenty thousand *reeds* in length, and ten thousand in breadth. And for these, even for the priests, shall 10
be the holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand *in length*, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof. *It shall be* for the priests that are sanctified of 11
the sons of Zadok, which have kept my charge; which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. And it shall be unto them an 12
oblation from the oblation of the land, a thing most holy, by the border of the Levites. And answerable unto the 13

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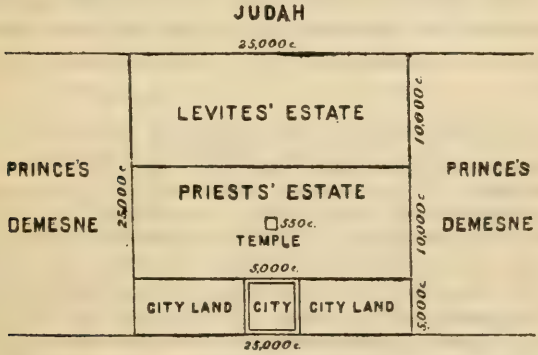
sites of Bethphage and Bethany, the Mount of Olives, and the valley of Hinnom.



PLAN F. THE 'OBLATION.'

10. These measurements amplify those of verse 9.
11. Cf. note on xliv. 15.
12. **from**: i. e. 'taken out of,' or 'in comparison with.'
13. The 'oblation of the Levites' is of precisely similar dimen-

border of the priests, the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the
14 breadth ten thousand. And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange it, nor shall the firstfruits of the land
15 be alienated: for it is holy unto the LORD. And the five thousand that are left in the breadth, in front of the five and twenty thousand, shall be for common use, for the city, for dwelling and for suburbs: and the city shall
16 be in the midst thereof. And these shall be the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and
17 the west side four thousand and five hundred. And the city shall have suburbs; toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward
18 the west two hundred and fifty. And the residue in the

---

sions; it would include the sites of Anathoth and Gibeon. For the second '10,000,' LXX reads '20,000,' as if applying to the domain of priests and Levites alike, as does verse 14.

14. of it, i. e. 'any part of it.' Since it is holy, to sell it would mean degradation to ordinary uses, i. e. profanation.

15. This arrangement would involve the greatest change of all. The old city had lain south and east of the temple (the present city lies east and north of the temple area). Jerusalem would have to be rebuilt between its old site (now left by Ezekiel free for the temple) and Bethlehem. The 'suburbs' are the open spaces or commons separating city from fields, like those round the temple (xlv. 2). This site, as it happens, is even more short of water.

16. Cf. Rev. xxi. 16. The city is thus a square of about a mile and a half each way; Josephus gives the side of the square in his time as a mile (*Wars*, v. 4. 3).

17. The ratio of 'suburbs' to city is a little more than that of 'suburbs' to temple (50: 500). Thus the whole breadth of the rectangle is taken up with city and suburbs.

length, answerable unto the holy oblation, shall be ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be answerable unto the holy oblation; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that labour in the city. And they that labour in the city, out of all 19
the tribes of Israel, shall till it. All the oblation shall 20
be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city.

And the residue shall be for the prince, on the one 21
side and on the other of the holy oblation and of the possession of the city, in front of the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward in front of the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, answerable unto the portions, it shall be for the prince: and the holy oblation and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof. Moreover from 22
the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's,

19. How the inhabitants were to be selected, or governed, is not stated; presumably the prince would live in the city. 'Labour' and 'till' translate the same Hebrew word; Ezekiel, who would have agreed with Paul's maxim, 'If any will not work, neither let him eat' (2 Thess. iii. 10), could conceive of no laziness in his new régime; the idea, indeed, is that of 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.

20. with the possession: i. e. including what belongs to the city, the oblation, in its wider sense, makes up a square.

xlviii. 21, 22. *The Prince's Estate.* This was necessarily large, since the prince had to provide the temple offerings. The domain stretches east and west of the sacred square, bounded by the Mediterranean on the west and the Jordan and Dead Sea (just including the site of Jericho) on the east; excluding the 'oblation,' its average length was some forty-four miles.

22. We should have expected a mention also of the priests' 'possession.' The reference to Benjamin is explained by the next verse; another indication that Ezekiel is writing with a diagram before him.

between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

23 And as for the rest of the tribes: from the east side
24 unto the west side; Benjamin, one *portion*. And by the
border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west
25 side; Simeon, one *portion*. And by the border of
Simeon, from the east side unto the west side; Issachar,
26 one *portion*. And by the border of Issachar, from the
east side unto the west side; Zebulun, one *portion*.
27 And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto
28 the west side; Gad, one *portion*. And by the border of
Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be
even from Tamar unto the waters of Meribath-kadesh,
29 to the brook *of Egypt*, unto the great sea. This is the
land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of
Israel for inheritance, and these are their several portions,
saith the Lord GOD.

30 And these are the goings out of the city; on the north

---

xlviii. 23-29. *The Territories of the Remaining Tribes.* Issachar and Zebulon are moved from the north, Gad from across Jordan.

28. Recapitulation of south frontier (xlvii. 19), as verse 1 had repeated xlvii. 16.

xlviii. 30-35. *The Gates and the New Name of the City.* The gates are arranged symmetrically, three on each side (cf. Rev. xxi. 12, 13); each is connected with a tribe, and in order that Levi may be represented, Ephraim and Manasseh are united as Joseph. On the north and south are the six tribes claiming descent from Leah (Judah comes between Reuben and Levi), on the east are the two Rachel tribes with Dan; on the west the remaining 'concubine' tribes. Each tribe has thus its part in the whole; contrast 1 Kings xii. 16. There is nothing to correspond to the precious stones which form the foundations and gates of the city in Rev. xxi. 19-22; such distinction would take from the pre-eminence of the temple which, in the vision of the Apocalypse, exists no more.

30. goings out, *lit.* 'extensions' or 'outskirts'; a common word in the Priests' code: e. g. Num. xxxiv. 4, 5 ff.; Josh. xv. 4 ff., xix. 14, &c.

side four thousand and five hundred *reeds* by measure:
and the gates of the city shall be after the names of the 31
tribes of Israel; three gates northward: the gate of
Reuben, one; the gate of Judah, one; the gate of Levi,
one: and at the east side four thousand and five hundred 32
reeds; and three gates: even the gate of Joseph, one;
the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one: and 33
at the south side four thousand and five hundred *reeds*
by measure; and three gates: the gate of Simeon, one;
the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one: at 34
the west side four thousand and five hundred *reeds*, with
their three gates: the gate of Gad, one; the gate of
Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one. It shall be 35
eighteen thousand *reeds* round about: and the name of
the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.

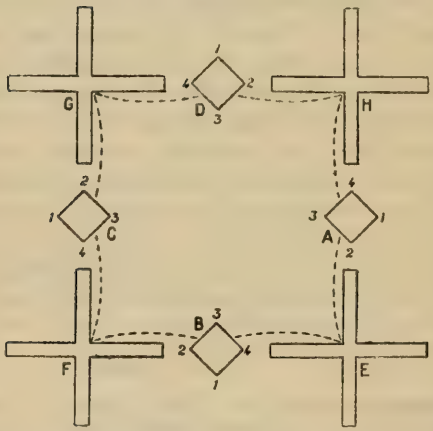
---

31. The first clause interrupts the parallelism of the description of the north gates with that of the rest, and reads like an afterthought; it would be better placed after the first clause of verse 30. Its insertion has necessitated the insertion of 'northward,' which simply repeats verse 30.

35. See note on verse 16. The circumference is thus about six miles.

the name of the city: cf. Isa. lx. 14-22, lxii. 12; Rev. xxi. 2. After describing in the fullest detail the temple, the author concludes his prophecy with the glory of the city, as if the city were to be, what it had been before, the centre of the land. By applying to the old centre the fundamental characteristic of his ideal for the future, Ezekiel joins old and new together; while he further makes it clear, in a conclusion as sudden and as impressive as that of a sonata of Beethoven, that the glory which fills the temple is no material presence to be confined to any one building made with hands, but fills also the city, and therefore, presumably, the holy land in its entirety.

PLAN G. THE THRONE CAR.



At A, B, C, D are the four living creatures.

The figures 1, 2, 3, 4 represent the faces of man, lion, eagle, ox, respectively.

At E, F, G, H the double wheels (moving at right angles to each other) touch the ground.

The dotted lines represent the outstretched wings.

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